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A COMMENTARY

ON THE

Prophecy of Habakkuk

BY THE

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THE PREFACE.

Nearly fifty years ago, when the bright light of heaven shone around my path-way, I commenced the study of the prophecy of Habakkuk, being convinced that among the Minor Prophets he ranks as one of the most interesting and important. Soon, in the mysterious Providence of God, darkness settled down on me; crippled by this experience, all special study was laid aside for several years, my time being devoted to the duties then required of me as pastor of the Dickinson church in the Presbytery of Carlisle. At intervals in after years friends kindly offered to be eyes for the blind. I must mention here my wife, Louisa W. Kennedy, the Rev. Cornelius R. Lane, D. D., a fellow-member of the faculty of Wilson Female College, the Rev. H. R. Schenck, pastor, and Mr. W. G. Reed, elder, of the Falling Spring Church. By their aid I now, after passing the allotted years of three score and ten, am able to present this work, in the hope that its readers will gain a plainer insight into the glorious truths presented by this prophet of old. Much exegetical matter has been omitted in this effort to present the interpretation of the prophecy clearly and fully. Though prosecuted under serious difficulties, the work has been a source of great pleasure to me. If this pleasure is shared by my friends, and my labor in any way redounds to the glory of God, through the better understanding of His Word, I will feel abundantly rewarded.

JAMES F. KENNEDY.

INTRODUCTION TO HABAKKUK.

I. NAME OF THE PROPHET.

1. The proper names of the ancient Hebrews form an interesting subject of study on account of their significance. The newborn child was named by the parents or relations, and sometimes even by its neighbors, in view of some event connected with its birth or appearance, the religious sentiments of the parents, or the hopes entertained respecting its future welfare. Under the superintending care of the God of Israel, the names of many who hold an important place in the church foreshadowed their character or their work. Examples of this kind may be seen in the names of Melchizedek, (King of righteousness,) Solomon, (peace,) Isaiah, (Jehovah is my Salvation,) Malachi, (My Messenger.) So much importance indeed was attached to personal appellations, that God Himself sometimes gave the name, as in the case of His own son, or changed a name in order to express some interesting truth in the history of the individual, as in the case of Abraham and Israel.

2. The name of the Prophet Habakkuk is written in the Septuagint, Ambakoun. There is much variety in its orthography among early Greek authors. Its usual Latin form was Habacuc, but the English orthography agrees more closely with the original Hebrew than either the Greek or Latin form. It is derived from the verbal root Hhabhak, and the reduplication of the last radical in its formation indicates the intensity of the action expressed by the verb. Abarbanel and Jerome interpret the verb to mean "wrestle" or "struggle" and the noun "a wrestler" or "struggler" "luctator fortis ac rigidus". This designates him as one who

strove earnestly with God in behalf of His people. This interpretation is founded upon a mistaken application to this root of the signification of another verb whose radicals are similar. Hhabhak is correctly interpreted "to fold one's hands," and in the Piel, "to embrace," hence Habakkuk signifies "embracing" when applied to a person actively, "one who embraces," or passively, "one who is embraced." Luther adopts the active sense and thinks that his name is intended to describe the Prophet as one who embraces his people in his loving heart, seeks to comfort them as a parent embraces his sick child, and endeavors to soothe his pain by assuring him he will be well soon. The passive sense of the noun is preferable; it suggests the idea that the prophet was so called because he was much embraced by his parents, his friends, his people, or his God, in token of their deep and abiding regard. An old rabbinical tradition asserts that the prophet was the son of the Shunamite woman by whom the prophet Elisha was so hospitably entertained, that he was called Habakkuk by his mother, in memory of the promise made to her by the prophet, "about this season, according to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son." II Kings 4:16. It also explains the reduplication of the last radical as a memento of the two embraces given to the newborn child, one by his mother, another by the prophet. This story is without foundation, but it shows that the passive signification of the name has the authority of rabbinical scholarship. If the name describes him as embraced by his people, then it expresses prophetically their future appreciation of his labor in reproving their sin and in interceding with God for them. If it refers to God, then it corresponds with the Greek word, Theophilos and Theophiles, which signify one beloved of God, his child, his mouth-piece, his faithful messenger, a type of the coming Messiah. No interpretation of the name, however, can be relied on which is not sustained by the authority of divine inspiration.

II. THE LIFE OF HABAKKUK.

The materials for a biographical sketch of Habakkuk are extremely meagre.

I. The information furnished by uninspired writers is more abundant than that derived from inspired sources, but is not reliable. Abarbanel in his Commentary refers to the rabbinical tradition that Habakkuk was the son of the Shunamite woman restored to life by Elisha. Another tradition represents him as the sentinel set by Isaiah to watch for the destruction of Babylon. Compare Is. 21: 8; Hab. 2: 1. The superscription of *Bel and the Dragon* in the Septuagint, which is preserved from the "Codex Chisianus," is as follows: "From the prophecy of Habakkuk, the son of Jesus, (or Joshua,) of the tribe of Levi." Dorotheus and Pseudo-Epiphanius state that he belonged to the tribe of Simeon, and was born at Beth-zohar, and that when Nebuchadnezzar advanced against Jerusalem, he fled to Ostrakim, a place whose position is identified by the name Rastraki, which is still borne by a mountain ridge near Arabia Petraea. Two years before the Jews returned from the Babylonish captivity he came back to his former home in Palestine, where he died and was buried. Eusebius and others state that he was buried at Keilah, and rabbinical writers mention other cities as the place of his burial. The following story is taken from an apocryphal addition to the Book of Daniel, called "*Bel and the Dragon*:" "Now there was in Jewry a prophet called Habakkuk who had made pottage, and had broken bread in a bowl, and was going into the field for to bring it to the reapers. But the angel of the Lord said unto Habakkuk, Go, carry the dinner that thou hast, into Babylon, unto Daniel, who is in the lion's den. And he said, Lord, I never saw Babylon, neither do I know where the den is. Then the angel of the Lord took him by the crown, and bare him by the hair of his head, and through the vehemence of His spirit set him in Babylon over the den, and

Habakkuk cried, saying, Oh, Daniel, take the dinner God has sent thee. And Daniel said, thou hast remembered me, oh God, neither hast thou forsaken them that seek and love Thee. So Daniel arose and did eat, and the angel of the Lord set Habakkuk in his own place immediately." From this account it would appear that he was the possessor of a portion of land, and that he remained in Palestine when the Jews were carried captive to Babylon.

2. From the book itself we learn,

First, that he was an educated man and perhaps a scribe. This is implied in the command of Jehovah to write the vision and inscribe it on tablets, 2: 2, a command which we suppose God designed the prophet to execute in person. He was well acquainted with the writings of the former prophets, and with the past history of his nation, to which he makes several allusions in chapter 3. He also makes several references to the geography of the surrounding nations, and declares many of the leading doctrines of theology. His whole prophecy bears testimony to his skill in composition.

Secondly. The mental characteristics of an inspired man were not obliterated by the Spirit in the act of inspiration. Their writings present to us decided marks of the intellectual peculiarities and moral qualities of authors, so that their characters may be read from their works. Judging Habakkuk by this standard we may describe him as the possessor of a logical mind. This is apparent in the gradual and progressive development of the prophecy from the beginning of the book to the close of the second chapter, and again in the third chapter, where he describes in logical order the tokens of the approach of Deity,—His external appearance and conduct, and the results of His actions. It is seen also in the prophet's argument in favor of the interference of Deity for his people, chapter 1: 1-4, and against their total destruction by the Chaldeans, and in the logical symmetry of the song of the nations, where he describes in each strophe a special

sin of the Chaldeans, and its punishment, and concludes with the reason why they must be so treated.

Thirdly. He was also a man of lively imagination. This trait characterizes the book throughout, in the frequent use of figures, among which we may only mention the comparison of the Chaldeans to a fisherman, in the close of the first chapter, the poetical conception of putting the judgment pronounced upon the Chaldeans in the mouth of the captive nations, and the vivid descriptions of the theophany in chapter third. The song of the nations in chapter second abounds in illustrations of this peculiarity. In it he compares the Chaldeans to a usurer, who is laden with the pledges taken from the poor, to a tempter who puts a bottle to his neighbor's lips, and to a bird of prey that has set his nest on high. He describes the stone and the beam crying out against the rapacity of the Chaldeans, and the future extension of the knowledge of the glory of God is illustrated by the waters covering the sea.

Fourthly. The book also represents the author as a man of ardent piety. He manifests a spirit of prayer. His soul is filled with loathing of the general corruption of the people, with earnest love for the church, and lively interest in its welfare. Like many of God's suffering children, he at first complains of Jehovah's indifference to the sins and sorrows of Israel, learns to wait patiently and watch the developments of Providence, and then closes the record of his experience with a joyful acknowledgment of the sovereignty of God, a believing confidence in His love and care, and a touching expression of his entire resignation to Jehovah's will.

Fifthly. Habakkuk also possessed the poetic gift in large measure. The utterances of the prophets are usually cast in the metrical mould, each verse being divided into clauses and each word accented for the purpose of cantillation. This is true also of the Song of the nations in chapter 2, and the Psalm for the temple service in chapter 3, without recog-

nizing the difference in the character of the composition, between them and the other parts of the book. These passages are poetry, the rest of the book is comparatively prose.

Sixthly.—His relation to his country and to the church. Possessing these personal characteristics, Habakkuk came in contact with his nation, possibly as a Levite and certainly as an author and a prophet. His connection with the tribe of Levi is very uncertain, and rests principally upon the evidence of tradition. Many commentators, however, think that a very clear intimation of this fact is furnished by the musical direction at the close of the book, "To the chief singer, on Shigionothai." Delitzsch infers from this passage that Habakkuk was a Levite, and probably a priest, since he would hardly have used this language unless himself engaged in the temple service. In confirmation of this opinion Delitzsch appeals to the style of the prophecy, which so closely resembles that of the Psalms of David and Asaph as to indicate the author's familiar acquaintance with them, and this we should naturally expect in a Levite who sang them. In further confirmation of this opinion, Delitzsch refers to the superscription of "Bel and the Dragon" in the Septuagint, which is preserved from the Codex Chisianus already quoted, section 1. His arguments, though ingenious, are inconclusive. The word used by Habakkuk, and translated "my stringed instruments," is susceptible of a different interpretation, which may be found in our commentary on chapter 3:1. It is used by Hezekiah, who certainly did not belong to the tribe of Levi. Familiarity with the Psalms might influence the style of any Jew or whatever tribe, and the inscription in the Codex Chisianus, as Delitzsch himself acknowledged, is in itself of no critical importance.

Seventhly. As an author, Habakkuk may have uttered much to his nation under the influence of the Holy Ghost, but this one little book contains all that he was directed to record for the edification of the church. His style is marked

by originality, and in this respect differs greatly from his contemporaries Zephaniah and Jeremiah. Many modern critics divide the prophets into two schools, one of which bears the name of Isaiah, and the other that of Jeremiah. One of the most prominent traits of the former is originality, while the latter is characterized by frequent quotations from older writers. Habakkuk is classed with Isaiah rather than with Jeremiah. Perspicuity is also a marked feature of his composition. There is one passage, however, in chapter 3:9, which is regarded by many as one of the most obscure in the Bible. It has received more than one hundred different interpretations. He uses several words which are found nowhere else in the Hebrew Scriptures. These are *m'gammah* (1:9,) *abh'tit*, (2:6,) *kikalon*, (2:16.) They were probably in common use in his day, and may have had a place in the language at a much earlier date. His diction is concise and forcible. His parallelisms are regular. His book is a unit. Its thought makes constant progress from beginning to end, and each part is essential to the completeness of the whole. The book is replete with beautiful imagery, and the description of the theophany in chapter 3 is one of the most sublime passages in the Word of God.

Eighthly. Habakkuk was a prophet. The Hebrew word for prophet, *nabhi*, is derived from the verbal root *nabha*, which is never found in the Hebrew Scripture, except in its passive and reflexive forms. It was, however, in common use in all the other languages belonging to the Semitic family. The meaning most generally assigned to it is "to pour forth, to utter." Ewald gives it the specific sense "to speak for another." Gesenius thinks it always involves the idea of speaking under some controlling influence, and this view is generally adopted by British scholars. Redsløb ascribes to it the specific signification "to baptize with, or immerse in a spirit." In accordance with these interpretations of the root *nabha*, the noun *nabhi* is said by some to have

the active sense of "one who speaks", or, as Ewald thinks, "one who speaks for another," and by others, to have the passive or objective force of "one who receives a communication or who acts under some spiritual influence with which he is baptized." The passive signification is the more common in nouns of the class to which *nabhi* belongs, but an appeal to the usage of the word in the Scriptures, proves conclusively that the active is its true sense. The most important passage of Scripture on this point is contained in Ex. 7: 1, 2. "The Lord said unto Moses, see, I have made thee a god unto Pharaoh, and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet. Thou shalt speak all that I command thee, and Aaron thy brother shalt speak unto Pharaoh, that he shall send the children of Israel out of his land." Here the word has the precise sense of spokesman. Aaron was Moses' prophet, because he was the organ of communication between him and the Egyptians. This signification suits the word wherever it occurs in the Scriptures. When the word is used to designate a prophet of Jehovah, we must understand by it "a spokesman," one who is an organ of communication between Jehovah and man. The term prophet is not applied in the Scriptures to all who were inspired men. It is not used to describe those whose inspiration was merely occasional, such as Eldad, Medad and Balaam, but designates the person to whom the title is given, one who holds the office of prophet and also possesses the gift of inspiration. Others also, like David and Daniel, whose inspiration was but temporary, do not receive the title, and this is accounted for by supposing that such were regarded as more honorable. From these considerations, we infer that Habakkuk possessed both the office and gift of prophecy, and that he held no higher position in the Jewish commonwealth.

Habakkuk did not take this office upon himself, but was called of God. No one, indeed, might assume or decline it at pleasure. It was the gift of Jehovah, and in the exer-

cise of His sovereignty. He bestowed it on whomsoever He pleased. Several of the patriarchs are known to have possessed it, and it is possible that each successive head of the family which was chosen by God to be the recipient of His grace, held the official position of a prophet of God. Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, are instances of the kind, and it is not likely that God, from whom all truth must come, would leave Himself without a spokesman in any of those early generations when there could be no written revelation. In John 11: 51 we read "And this spake he not of himself, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus died for that nation." This passage renders it possible that the high priests also were prophets *ex-officio*. It is certain that Jehovah selected certain individuals in various ages of the world to be his spokesmen, and, that in His selection, He was governed by no human considerations. The gift of prophecy was bestowed on both the old and young, male and female, high and low, educated men and untaught husbandmen, the righteous and the wicked, Israelites and foreigners. The one thing essential to the prophetic office was the appointment of God.

In order to qualify him for the office to which he had been called, Habakkuk received the gift of inspiration. This was an influence of the Holy Ghost upon the minds of certain select men, which made them the organs of God for the infallible communications of His mind and will. We cannot enter the mind of the Holy Spirit and describe the mode in which He affects the mind of man in inspiration. It is plain, however, that it differs from the mode in which He creates, illuminates, regenerates, sanctifies, or raises from the dead. The Scriptures furnish us with such descriptions of the influence by the Holy Ghost as the following: "Thus saith the Lord," "The word of the Lord came to the prophet," "The Spirit came upon him," "The power, or hand, of God was upon him," "They spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit," i. e., so that, just as a ship is borne along by

the wind, so are the prophets moved by the Spirit. Inspiration, then, was a peculiar, mighty and sovereign influence of the Spirit.

In order that a prophet might communicate God's will to others, necessity required that it first be revealed to himself. This was done occasionally by an audible voice, sometimes by a dream or vision, or by the suggestion of the truth to the prophet's mind. The mental condition of the prophets while receiving a revelation corresponds to the character of the influence exerted by the Holy Ghost, their inspiration being but merely that of superior knowledge, genius or piety. It was neither morbid nor unnatural, but healthy and preternatural. All the powers of mind whose exercise was needed were in full activity, though swayed by the Spirit, according to His will. The prophets retained their own consciousness and self-possession. Their spirits were subject to them, while they willingly yielded themselves to the moving of the Holy Ghost. They were sometimes unaware of the fact that they were inspired, and often did not comprehend the full meaning of what they uttered. The union between the two elements of our personality is so close, that the body always sympathizes with the mind, or obeys its dictates. Hence, during inspiration, the body sometimes lies entirely passive, as in sleep, and at other times executes the interests of the mind by looking, hearing, speaking, writing, moving, and rarely by such excitement of the muscular system as indicates intense mental emotion. Among the heathen the last was regarded as the special and characteristic effect of inspiration, and this may account for the fact that one of the oldest Greek names for a prophet, *mantis*, is derived from the verb *maneo*, to rave, to be mad. The Holy Ghost not only revealed God's will to men, but so superintended the prophets in the act of dictating it to others, that they were the immediate organs of communication between God and man. Much that was uttered by the prophets was left unrecorded, but other portions, like the book of Ha-

bakkuk, were written down under the superintendence of the Holy Ghost. These books constitute the inspired Word of God. What the Spirit revealed to the prophets, they dictated to others. God spake in them, so that what they said God said. Their messages came to men with all the authority of Jehovah Himself. They were free from all possible error, and contained just the truths which were appropriate in the judgment of infinite wisdom to the time, place, and circumstances in which they were delivered. These attributes of authority and infallibility belonged to all their utterances in the name of the Lord, whether historical, doctrinal, practical, or prophetic. So Habakkuk spake as the prophet of God, and all that he uttered in God's name is the Word of God, whether he complains of the sinfulness of the people, predicts the punishment of Judah and of Babylon, declares the great principles of God's Kingdom, utters his amazement at God's dealings with His people, or asserts his own confident trust in the covenant God of Israel. The prophets sustained a close relation to each other as members of the same order and heralds of the one Word of God. Infinite wisdom gave to each one his place among his brethren, and to his special work, and to his communication was written down for the benefit of the church, assigned to it its proper place in the canon of Scripture. In order to comprehend the relations which Habakkuk sustained we must first determine the date of his prophecy.

III. DATE OF THE PROPHECY.

I. The period embraced by the various hypotheses respecting the date of this prophecy extends from the beginning of the reign of Manasseh to the close of the Babylonish captivity. The history of the kingdom of Judah during this time is of great importance in the discussion of this question.

To the east of Judah lay Assyria and Chaldea; to the southwest, Egypt. Assyria had long been the ruling power in Central Asia. Chaldea or Babylonia was a con-

stituent part of the Assyrian empire, though it had its own king. Egypt was the ruling power in North Africa. Judah lay between the two, and would in all probability become tributary to either power as circumstances might determine, because it was too feeble to resist successfully an attack from either. During the reign of Manasseh, Assyria had obtained so much control over Judah that Manasseh himself was carried away to Babylon, where he was held for a time in captivity and finally restored to his throne. He reigned 55 years in Jerusalem, B. C. 699 to 644. "He did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, and he made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err and do worse than the heathen whom the Lord destroyed before the children of Israel," 2 Chron. 33:11 etc. "Therefore the Lord commanded that Judah should be cast out of His sight for the sins of Manasseh," 2 Kings 24:3. The Lord consequently gave him into the hands of the Assyrians, by whom he was led into captivity at Babylon, where the Assyrian King was probably holding his court at the time. Here Manasseh repented and humbled himself before the Lord, who restored him to his kingdom. On his return he purified the temple and the city of Jerusalem, removed the strange gods and the altars devoted to their service, and commanded Judah to serve the Lord. King Amon succeeded him, and reigned two years. It is possible that these were but parts of years reckoned as whole years, according to Hebrew custom, so that they may add but one full year to the chronology of the period. Amon was a wicked King, and under him Judah again relapsed into idolatry. Josiah began to reign B. C. 642, when but eight years old. During the early part of his reign the most abominable idolatry was practised in Judah and Jerusalem, 2 Kings 22:17; 2 Chron. 33:11; Jer. 16. Violence and crime pervaded society. The worshippers of Jehovah were few in number, and their influence for good was almost entirely lost in the midst of abounding sin. Josiah, in the eighth year of his reign, began to seek the favor of

the Lord. In the twelfth year, B. C. 630, a partial reformation was effected by him. He purified the temple in Jerusalem, and destroyed the altars, images and groves connected with idol worship throughout the land of Israel. A second and more thorough reformation occurred in the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign, B. C. 624, in which he endeavored to remove from the land all traces of idolatry, and established in its stead the worship of Jehovah. No intimation of the interference of Assyria in the affairs of Judah occurs in the historical books of the Old Testament, during the days of Amon or Josiah, and this is due probably to the fact that Assyria was waning in power and rapidly approaching dissolution. Babylon and Media, on the other hand, were growing in strength and influence, and in the year B. C. 625 united their forces, threw off the Assyrian yoke, and destroyed Nineveh. The Assyrian territory was then divided between Cyaxares, king of Media, and Nabopolassar, who became king of Babylon. The seat of the southern empire was Babylon, and that city became the mistress of Central Asia. The causes of enmity between Egypt and Chaldea led to the invasion of the latter by Psammetichus, king of Egypt. In order to accomplish his purpose, he engaged in a war with the Philistines, through whose territory he must pass in order to reach Chaldea. While he was engaged in the siege and capture of the Philistine Ashdod, the Scyths also invaded Palestine, and were marching through Philistia towards Egypt. These Scyths had invaded Media while Cyaxares, the Median king, was leading an expedition against Assyria B. C. 632. (Rawlinson's *Ancient Monarchies* Vol II, pp. 226-227.) They plundered Media and Assyria, captured cities, burnt the towns, and spread into Syria and Palestine. The king of Egypt was then besieging Ashdod, and sent ambassadors to Ascalon to meet the Scyths. The result of the negotiation was that the Scyths were induced to abandon their enterprise, and Psammetichus was left at liberty to pursue his expedition to Assyria. The

Scyths were soon expelled from Central Asia, and driven beyond the Caucasus. The whole period of their southern progress is limited by Herodotus to twenty-eight years. The invasion of Chaldea was prosecuted by Pharaoh Necho. His passage through Palestine was resisted by Josiah, who was slain in battle at Megiddo, B. C. 611. Jehoahaz succeeded Josiah, having been made king by the people of the land, and reigned three months. He was then deposed by the king of Egypt, who placed Jehoiakim upon the throne, and imposed a heavy tribute on the kingdom of Judah. The Egyptians pressed forward and took Carchemish on the Euphrates, B. C. 611. Carchemish was the capital of the king of Asshur, II Kings 23: 29, and was probably the stronghold occupied by the remnant of the Assyrian Empire which had been dissolved when Ninevah was utterly destroyed. The Egyptians retained the place, however, but a short time. The Chaldeans under Nebuchadnezzar took the city, B. C. 608 or 607 and pursued the Egyptians westward with a design of invading Egypt in turn. They captured Jerusalem B. C. 608 or 607. Jehoiakim reigned under the authority of the Chaldeans eight years longer, and was succeeded by his son Jehoiachin, who reigned 3 months and 10 days, when he was deposed by Nebuchadnezzar, and taken to Babylon. Zedekiah was then placed on the throne. His rebellion against the Chaldeans occasioned the third invasion of the land by the King of Babylon, who again captured Jerusalem, B. C. 588, and carried away a large portion of the people into captivity. The captivity of Judah continued 70 years, according to II Chron. 36: 24. The Jews returned from Babylon in the first year of Cyrus, B. C. 538. The first year of the captivity therefore corresponds with the date given above to the invasion of the Chaldeans under Nebuchadnezzar, 608 B. C. The prophecy announcing the captivity of Judah was therefore fulfilled in the period embraced between B. C. 608 and 588. In this period there were three deportations, B. C. 608, B. C. 599, B. C. 588.

2. The prophecy is said to have been uttered during the reign of Manasseh, by the following authors: Kimchi and Abarbanel among the Rabbins, Witsius, Kalinski, Cornelius a Lapide, Wahl, Ko, Jahn, Haevernich, and Keil. Syn-cellus makes him contemporary with Ezekiel and extends his prophecy probably from the time of Manasseh to that of Daniel and Joshua the son of Josedech. Chronicon Alexandrinum or Paschale, 7th century, represents him as contemporary with Zephaniah in the beginning of the reign of Josiah, with Daniel and Ezekiel in Persia, with Haggai and Zechariah in Judea, and with Baruch in Egypt. Lowth, Davidson, and Delitzsch place him in the early part of the reign of Josiah. Calmet, Jaeger, Ewald, De Wette, Newcome, 606-598 B. C. Green thinks the prophecy was not uttered in the days of Josiah. Eichhorn, Horne, Winer, Theiner & Black place the date of the prophecy during the first invasion of Chaldea in the reign of Jehoiakim. Rosenmueller places chapter 1 under Jehoiakim, chapter 2 under Jehoiachin, and chapter 3 under Zedekiah. Knobel and Maurer date the first chapter 605 B. C., the second and third in the beginning of the following year. Hitzig and Schaff, 604 B. C. Usher, Henderson, Meyer, Cowles, Phillipson, Sawyer, Schegg, 609-606 B. C. Fausset, 610 B. C. All these agree in fixing the reign of Jehoiakim as the period of the prophecy. Umbreit, Knobel, and Meyer, after the battle of Carchemish, B. C. 606. Hesselberg about 600 B. C. The following commentators fixed the date of the prophecy during the Babylonish captivity, and after the destruction of Jerusalem: Jerome, Remigius, Albertus, Hugo, Lyrantius as stated by Cornelius a Lapide, I. 507.

3. The conclusion which a critic reaches respecting the date of this book will depend very much on his views of inspiration. If the prophetic office and gift of Habakkuk be denied, the one or other of the following theories must be adopted respecting the date of the prophecy. Either the book is a *vaticinium post eventum*, i. e., a prophecy really

written after the event which it pretends to foretell; or it was uttered prior to the event indeed, but only so long before it, that it might be foreseen by ordinary human sagacity. Both these theories have had their adherents, as may be seen by the list given above, but both must be discarded by a believer in the inspiration of the prophets. No true prophet would represent himself as living at any other time than that in which he really acted. The book of Habakkuk has always had a place in the canon of Scripture and has appeared in the translations of the Hebrew Scriptures into other languages. The Septuagint version, which was made in Egypt during the third century, B. C., contains, in addition to it, some apochryphal stories which did not belong to it in the Hebrew language. We do not know certainly when the canon of the Old Testament was formed. Jewish tradition, which is an important witness in all matters of fact, ascribes it to Ezra, Nehemiah, or the men of the Great Synagogue. It is, however, a question of comparatively slight importance whether this statement be true or not, since we know that this work was actually done as early as 131 B. C. We find the Son of Sirach in his prologue to the book of Ecclesiasticus speaking of the three-fold division of the Hebrew Scriptures into the Law, the Prophets, and the Other Scriptures. The canonical books were so carefully guarded that it would have been impossible either to add to, or subtract from their number. This complete Old Testament was in the hands of Christ, was quoted in His addresses, and publicly read by Him in all the synagogues. He even recognizes the same general division of the books as had been previously mentioned by the Son of Sirach, Luke 24: 44. The Apostles recognized the same canon, and two of them quote and comment upon a passage from the book of Habakkuk. This entire collection of sacred books was recognized by Christ and His apostles as the inspired Word of God, and we need nothing more to prove them so, for Christ was the Son of God, and the Apostles were taught by the Holy

Spirit. The sonship and consequently the divinity of Christ may be proved from the declarations of God the Father at His baptism and on the mount of Transfiguration. The truth He taught was such as became the Son of God, and its effects prove its divine origin. He uttered prophecies which have come to pass, and wrought great miracles, among which His own resurrection holds a prominent place as the special evidence of His sonship. He finally ascended to heaven after having promised the Holy Ghost to His disciples. The Apostles were inspired men, and proved their possession of the Holy Spirit by the nature and effects of their doctrines, by their miracles and their prophecies. Since Christ and His Apostles declared the Old Testament to be the Word of God, we have no right to deal with it in any other way than as an inspired book. Habakkuk must therefore be acknowledged as a true prophet of God. Those theories which represent him as composing the book during the Babylonish captivity, and yet representing himself as writing before the Chaldean invasion, or describe him as writing at a time when the invasion would be foreseen by mere human sagacity, are entirely inconsistent with the nature of inspiration and the office of a spokesman of God. This theory is also inconsistent with itself. The prophecy of Habakkuk predicts two remarkable facts, the Chaldean invasion, and the fall of Babylon. Rationalistic interpreters, while they admit of no other inspiration than that of human sagacity, assign to Habakkuk a date prior to the Chaldean invasion, and thus ignore the fact that he uttered a clear and distinct announcement of the destruction of Babylon, which occurred B. C. 538. No human sagacity could have foreseen this event as early as B. C. 608. The Chaldeans had then overthrown Nineveh, and had conquered Egypt, their competitor for universal empire. All the signs of the times indicated the establishment of an empire that should last, like the Assyrian, for hundreds of years. Mere consistency with their own theory of inspiration should lead

these critics to place Habakkuk just before the fall of Babylon. Delitzsch suggests that the most appropriate point for them to settle upon would be the day when Cyrus was about to divert the waters of the river Gyndes into the canals which he had prepared for this purpose, and thus open the way for his troops along the dry bed of the river into the city of Babylon. A mode of interpretation which is not self-consistent cannot be correct. We turn then to the book itself and attempt to gather from its language the indications of its date.

4. The first of these is that furnished by the references made to the temple, "The Lord is in His holy temple," and to the temple services in the musical directions at the beginning and end of the psalm in chapter 3, "a prayer of Habakkuk the prophet upon shigionoth," and "to the chief musician upon my stringed instruments." These passages show that the temple was still standing and that the service of song was performed in its courts, under the direction of the chief musician. The temple was destroyed by order of Nebuchadnezzar, and all its liturgical worship suspended B. C. 588. Hence the book must have been written before that date.

5. Another indication of the date of the prophecy is contained in chapter 1: 5-6, in which the prophet foretells the raising up of the Chaldeans, who should invade the land of Judah. The prophecy must consequently have preceded the execution of this work by Jehovah. Two opinions have prevailed in regard to the exact nature of this work, each based upon the interpretation of the words in chapter 1: 6. One class of critics translate the clause "Behold me, raising the Chaldeans, exciting them, stirring them up to invade Judah." Thus understood the prophecy refers to the events which immediately led to the invasion of Judah, such as the elevation of Jehoiakim by the king of Egypt to the throne of Judah, and the capture of Carchemish. If this view be correct, then the words of the prophet show, that

he must have spoken before the invasion, B. C. 608, though it may have been but a little while before. Another class of critics give to this phrase, the sense of raising up, i. e., of preparing the Chaldeans to be the instruments of Jehovah for the chastisement of Judah. This would include such events in the history of the neighboring nations as the rise of the Chaldeans to a prominent position in the Assyrian empire, 2 Chron. 33: 11, the consolidation of Media, which had been previously conquered by Assyria and was therefore inimical to it, (Rawlinson II. 384,) the invasion of Assyria by Cyaxares the Mede, the expedition of Nabopolassar against Babylon, his union with Cyaxares against Assyria, the fall of Nineveh, the overthrow of Assyria, the elevation of the Chaldeans to supreme power, the invasion of the territory by the Egyptians, and the reduction of Judah into a fief of Egypt. By this series of events the Chaldeans, who had been under the sway of the Assyrians, became the ruling power in Central Asia, and were led to assume an attitude of hostility to the kingdom of Judah. They were thus "raised up" to execute the will of God in reference to the punishment of His sinful people. From this view of the passage, it follows that Habakkuk must have spoken some years before the fall of Nineveh and the rise of the Chaldean empire, B. C. 625, and most probably during the latter part of Manasseh's reign.

6. The incredulity of the Jews was a marked feature of the time when Habakkuk prophesied "Ye will not believe, though a man declare it unto you" (1: 5.) This disposition characterized the minds of men during the latter part of Manasseh's reign more decidedly than at any other period in the life of that generation to which Jehovah refers. Manasseh had been a captive in Babylon, where the Assyrian king probably held his court occasionally, and perhaps during part of each year. After Manasseh's conversion, he was restored to his kingdom, while he acknowledged the supremacy of the great king of Assyria. An announcement

of the invasion of his kingdom by the Chaldeans, who also recognized the supremacy of Assyria, would have been utterly incredible. The short reign of Amon did not differ from that of his father, so far as his relation to Assyria was concerned. The reign of Josiah was divided into two nearly equal portions by the fall of Nineveh, B. C. 625. During the first half, a Chaldean invasion was less incredible than in the days of Manasseh and Amon, because Assyria was decreasing in strength, while Babylon was increasing in power. This period is marked by the war between Cyaxares and Assyria, and by the invasion of the Scyths, both of which contributed to weaken Assyria. As long, however, as Assyria remained supreme, a Chaldean invasion would be impracticable. After the fall of Nineveh and the transfer of the supremacy to the Chaldeans, an invasion of Judah by them was far more probable, for it might be expected that the Chaldeans would endeavor to maintain the unity of the empire, and retain under their sway all who had previously acknowledged Assyrian rule. The expedition of Josiah against Pharaoh Necho, which led to the defeat and death of the former at Megiddo, seems to have been prompted by the desire to prevent a collision between Egypt and Chaldea, in which Judah must fall a prey to the victor. The fall of Assyria had freed Josiah from any further allegiance to it, if any had been demanded. The Chaldeans as yet had no claim on him or on his kingdom, and hence we cannot suppose Josiah's expedition against Pharaoh Necho to have been dictated by fealty to them. The language of Necho (2 Chron. 35: 21) shows that he did not consider Josiah as confederate with the house of Chaldea, with whom Egypt was at war. Josiah was rather moved by a dread of the Chaldean invasion, which would be the sure consequence of Necho's advance to Carchemish. He did not fear Egypt, but wished to protect his land from a power greater than Assyria, and which would be provoked to march through Palestine upon Egypt. After the defeat of Josiah, Judah became tributary

to Egypt, and Jehoiakim was placed upon the throne by Necho. From that time onward the invasion of Palestine was almost a certainty. Judah could not be permitted to remain a fief of Egypt, because the possession of Judah would make it an easy matter at any time for Egypt to invade Chaldean territory. The incredulity of the people during the latter part of Manasseh's reign would certainly be most pronounced, and better correspond with the description of 1: 5, than any time between his reign and the fall of Jerusalem.

7. Another important indication of the date of the prophecy is contained in the expression "in your days" (1-5,) in which Jehovah defines the period within which He will perform His divine work of "raising up" the Chaldeans and punishing the Jews. This phrase may designate any period within the life of a generation. In Ezekiel 12: 25, this includes six years, and in Jer. 16: 9, twenty years. The generation which Moses brought out of Egypt perished in the wilderness during the next 40 years. In Mark 13: 30, the expression "this generation shall not pass away," is used to designate a period of about forty years, which elapsed between the utterance of the prophecy and the destruction of Jerusalem. Many of those who returned with Ezra from Babylon to Jerusalem had seen the first temple, which had been destroyed 52 years before, Ezra 3: 12. If Habakkuk spoke to men of twenty years old and upward, many of whom might live to be 90 years old, then his prophecy might be dated 50 years before the Chaldean invasion or B. C. 658. If there were among his hearers, boys of twelve years of age, the time at which, according to Jewish ideas they become personally responsible for their deeds, we might suppose it very possible for them to live to see the invasion. Consequently the date of the prophecy might be B. C. 658. This is the farthest limit which should be assigned to the expression "in your days," and its exact force must be determined by comparing this expression with the others

previously considered. We infer from the testimony of the book itself that its author prophesied between B. C. 608 and 648, and probably in the days of Manasseh.

8. Another indication of the date of the prophecy is furnished by the description of the moral condition of the people in 1:2-4. Iniquity prevailed and consequently trouble abounded. Power was exerted unjustly and oppressively. Strife and contention were prominent characteristics of society. The law had lost its influence both upon the lives of men and the administration of justice. The wicked outnumbered the righteous and nullified their influence. Therefore wrong judgment proceeded. This description is remarkable for one striking omission. It makes no special mention of idolatry as one of the crying sins of the people. This suggests the inference that Habakkuk prophesied at a time when the worship of idols was abolished, or at least Jehovah was publicly recognized as the God of Judah. This occurred twice in the history of the generation to whom Habakkuk refers, first in the reformation after the return of Manasseh to Judah, and secondly, in the reformation which began in the eighth year of Josiah and was resumed in his twelfth year. Delitzsch adopts the beginning of Josiah's reformation as the date of the prophecy, but the considerations we have already presented point rather to the reformation of Manasseh as the true date.

9. Attention has been called by Delitzsch and others to Habakkuk's style as a means of determining the date of the prophecy. There is such a difference in this respect between the older and later prophets that they have been divided by many critics into the school of Isaiah and that of Jeremiah. The former embraces the older prophets whose productions are marked by originality of expressions and purity of language, variety of quotations, and infrequency of historical narrative. To this class of writers Habakkuk certainly belongs. His style resembles his predecessors rather than his successors. His diction is

rather that of Isaiah than Jeremiah, while at the same time he employs some words and phrases hitherto unrecorded. He quotes but little from older writers. He introduces no historical statements, but from beginning to end pursues his line of thought, until it terminates in his psalm of praise in chapter 3. If we compare the prophets Zephaniah and Jeremiah with him, we shall perceive in them the existence of a more modern style. Their diction lacks much of the antique character of Habakkuk's prophecy. They abound in quotations from older workers, and Jeremiah especially in historical matter. The inference from these facts is very plain. Habakkuk must have lived and written before such influences were exerted as those which affected the style of Zephaniah and Jeremiah. Since then, Jeremiah began to prophesy in the thirteenth year of Josiah, and Zephaniah in the fifteenth or sixteenth year of Josiah's reign, we must assign to Habakkuk an earlier date than to either of these prophets. If then, Habakkuk prophesied between B. C. 625 and 662, during the prevalence of the worship of Jehovah, and at a time when his message would be received with the greatest unbelief, we may infer that his prophecy was uttered in one of the later years of Manasseh's reign.

10. The internal indications of the date of the prophecy are substantiated by several considerations not connected with the matter or style itself. The position of Habakkuk in the collection of the Minor Prophets between Nahum and Zephaniah. It is an old and widely received theory concerning the arrangement of the Minor Prophets that they stand in almost chronological order. Whatever may be said against this theory, it is certainly true that the books of this collection whose date is positively fixed do stand in the order of time. If we look at the latter half of the collection of the Minor Prophets, we observe that without doubt five of its books are so arranged. No sufficient reason can be assigned for placing the book of Habakkuk out of its proper order, and the only legitimate inference is that he prophe-

sied after Nahum and before Zephaniah. Zephaniah preceded the fall of Nineveh, which occurred B. C. 625, and hence no later date than this can be assigned to him, while he probably prophesied a year or two before that date. Habakkuk must be placed before 625 B. C.

11. Delitzsch, in the introduction to his commentary on this book, presents a very ingenious argument to prove Habakkuk's priority to Zephaniah and Jeremiah, by showing that both these prophets have quoted from him. The passage in Habakkuk which is quoted by Zephaniah, is found in Hab. 2: 20, "Let all the earth keep silence before Him," which reappears in Zeph. 1: 7, in the clause "Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord." This expression is probably borrowed by one of these writers from the other, because no preceding writer makes any use of it all, and in both passages it is connected with a description of Jehovah. It appears that Zephaniah borrows from Habakkuk, because first, Habakkuk is remarkably original in his language, and very seldom borrows from older writers. Secondly, Zephaniah borrows so frequently that his book is almost a mosaic of quotations. Sometimes two are united in a single verse, the latter part of 1:9 is taken from Joel 2, and hence the first clause is most probably quoted. Thirdly, Habakkuk's use of this expression seems more natural and easy, while in Zephaniah the connection is more obscure, and the expression somewhat abbreviated, in accordance with his characteristic conciseness. The very mode of using the clause shows it to be the thought of another. Fourthly, the passage in Habakkuk is also quoted by Zechariah, and with greater accuracy than by Zephaniah. He would most likely quote from the original author, and hence we infer that both he and Zephaniah quote from Habakkuk. We reach in this way the same conclusion as in the preceding paragraph, that Habakkuk must have prophesied before B. C. 625. Delitzsch also argues that Jeremiah quoted from Habakkuk, and compares Hab. 2:12, with Jer. 22:13,

and Hab. 2:13, with Jer. 51:58, and Hab. 1:8 with Jer. 4:13; 5: 6. Many other passages of Jeremiah have been collected by Delitzsch, which resemble closely the language of Habakkuk. Haevrnich compares the following passages of Habakkuk and Jeremiah to sustain the same conclusion: Jer. 4: 13 with Hab. 1: 8; Jer. 5: 6-15 with Hab. 1: 8; 1: 6; Jer. 6: 23 with Hab. 1: 7; Hab. 2:13 with Jer. 1: 37. Jeremiah commenced to prophecy in the thirteenth year of Josiah and the prophecy of Habakkuk must have been uttered prior to B. C. 628.

12. Another reason for supposing that Habakkuk prophesied in the reign of Manasseh, is derived from the name of Josiah's elder son Eliakim, which signifies "God shall raise up." This name was afterwards changed by the king of Egypt to Jehoiakim, which signifies "Jehovah (i. e., the covenant God of Israel,) shall raise up." Among the Israelites, names given to children were usually suggested by some circumstances connected with the birth, or with the feelings of those who were present and in any way interested in it. Compound names like Eliakim generally had a spiritual bearing, and embodied some great religious truth, or a reference to some act of Jehovah, past, present or future. The names Eliakim and Jehoiakim are pertinent examples of the latter class. They express the belief of the giver, that God would "raise up" some one, and imply also the existence of a previous prophecy relating to this subject. The name Eliakim expresses the principal thought of the prophecy of Habakkuk, which is contained in 1: 6, "Behold me, raising up the Chaldeans." Josiah was early converted to God, and nothing would be more natural than that such threatenings announced by Habakkuk should make a powerful impression upon his mind and lead him to call his son Eliakim. This son was born B. C. 636. When Eliakim was eleven years old, God "raised up" the Chaldeans to supreme power. When twenty five years old, he was placed on the throne of Judah, which was then tributary to Egypt,

and in the third year of his reign, his land was invaded by Nebuchadnezzar, by whom he was taken captive. His experience agrees most accurately with his name, and both suggest at once the prophecy of Habakkuk as the source of his name. A similar remark may be made respecting the name of his successor Zedekiah, in whose reign the captivity was completed and the temple destroyed, and whose name signifies "the justice of Jehovah." The providence of God seems so to have interfered in the case of both these kings, that their very names were prophetic of His dealings with them and their nation.

13. The last argument we shall present is derived from the close correspondence between the contents of the prophecy and the condition of things in the reign of Manasseh. Any one who will consult the following passages, 2 Kings 21: 9; 23: 26; 24: 3; 2 Chron. 33: 9; and Jer. 15: 4, will find that the sins of Judah had increased during the reign of Manasseh to a degree which God could no longer endure without inflicting punishment; that God sent His prophets to declare this fact; and that the mode of punishment would be to give them over to the horrors of captivity. No time could be better suited for the clear, sharp, stern announcement of the coming Chaldean invasion which Habakkuk makes, than the later days of Manasseh. Since Manasseh's captivity and return to his throne, and the reinstatement of the worship of Jehovah, had little or no effect on the mass of the people, we may with entire propriety assign to Habakkuk the fifty-first year of the reign of Manasseh as the date of his prophecy. If we count the duration of King Amon's reign as but two years, we shall have 40 years as the period between the utterance of the prophecy and its fulfilment in the Chaldean invasion. This number forty is of frequent occurrence in sacred history, and we desire to call attention to three of these instances in the history of this same people. The prophet Jeremiah began his prophetic work, which was most intimately connected with the

captivity of the Jews and the destruction of Jerusalem in the thirteenth year of Josiah, B. C. 628 or 629, exactly 40 years before the destruction of the temple and city in B. C. 588. So also Moses, in the earlier history of the nation, predicted the destruction of the generation which came out of Egypt within 40 years. Our Lord Jesus predicted the overthrow of Jerusalem just about forty years before it fell. The analogy between these three cases shows that it belonged to Jehovah's plan to give the same warning each time. If Christ gave Jerusalem forty years between the announcement of her destruction and its actual occurrence, then we may reasonably suppose that He did the same thing by the mouth of His prophet, before the invasion of the Chaldeans. We place Habakkuk then in the fifty-first year of Manasseh's reign, B. C. 648, forty years before the Chaldeans invasion.

IV. THE UNITY OF THE BOOK.

The unity of the book of Habakkuk is one of its principal features. It assumes the form of a dialogue, in which, in the first chapter, the prophet declares the wickedness of his people, God announces His chastisement in course of preparation, and the prophet expresses his astonishment that that God should thus treat the contending parties. Chapter 2:1, the prophet declares his intention to stand on the watch and receive the communications of Jehovah. Verses 2-6, the prophet declares his intentions by writing a vision. The punishment of the proud and insatiable Chaldean will surely come, and all nations are represented as joining in the song of triumph. Verses 6-20, in five strophes, contain the song of triumph executed by the nations. Chapter 3 gives first, the title; then in the second verse, the prophet in penitent faith offers his prayer for the advancement of God's cause; and then in verses 3-16 he praises God for the exercise of His sovereignty for the benefit of His people; and in verses 17-19 he expresses his

submission to God and confident hope of good. This unity of the book is illustrated by the following translation of the prophecy:

The Title 1: 1. The utterance which Habakkuk the prophet saw.

Verses 2-4. The prophet complains to Jehovah of His apparent unconcern, though crime prevails in Judah :

2. How long, Jehovah, have I cried, and thou wilt not hear! (how long) shall I cry out unto thee, Violence, and thou wilt not save? 3. Why wilt thou show me iniquity, and why wilt thou behold trouble? Oppression and violence are before me, and strife has existed, and contention will raise itself. 4. Therefore law shall be torpid, and judgment will not go forth to purity; for the wicked is encompassing the righteous, wherefore judgment shall go forth perverted.

Verses 5-11. Jehovah describes the instrument which He has prepared for the punishment of Judah: 5. Behold ye among the peoples, and regard, and be greatly astonished! For a work working in your days, ye will not believe, though it be told. 6. For behold me, raising up the Chaldeans, the bitter and hasty nation, the one going unto the breadths of the earth to possess dwelling-places (that belong) not to it. 7. Terrible and dreadful (is it), from itself its judgment and its dignity shall go forth. 8. And swifter than leopards are its horses, and more fierce than the wolves of evening; and its horsemen sweep proudly on, and its horsemen shall come from afar; they shall fly like an eagle hastening to eat. 9. Its all shall come for violence, the desire of their faces is forward, and it shall gather the captivity like sand. 10. And this (people) shall scoff at kings, and princes shall be a derision unto it. It shall deride every fortress, and it will heap up earth and take it. 11. Then it has changed spirit, and transgressed, and become guilty. This his power is for his god.

Verses 12-17. In this paragraph the prophet replies express-

ing his assurance that God will raise up the Chaldeans for the chastisement, and not for the destruction, of His people: 12. Art thou not from eternity, Jehovah? My God, my Holy One, we shall not die, Jehovah! for judgment hast thou set him; and Rock! for chastisement hast thou ordained him. 13. Thou art of purer eyes than to look upon evil, and to behold trouble thou wilt not be able. Wherefore wilt thou behold spoilers? Wilt thou keep silence, while the wicked swallows up him that is more righteous than he? 14. And make man as the fishes of the sea, as the creeping things over which there is no ruler? 15. Its all has litted up with hook; it will catch him with its net, and gather him with its seine; therefore will it rejoice and exult. 16. Wherefore it will sacrifice to its net, and burn incense to its seine, for by them its portion is fat, and its food is fattened meat. 17. Shall it therefore empty its net, and continually spare not to destroy the nations?

Chapter 2. The author declares his purpose to place himself where he can hear the voice of Jehovah and offer his reply.

1. On my watch let me stand, and let me station myself upon a tower, and I will look out to see what he will speak in me, and what I shall return upon my complaint.

2-6. Jehovah bids the prophet prepare a public tablet for his vision, which will be fulfilled in the proper time and place. The Chaldean is proud and fierce. Obedience to the law of the Lord will alone secure righteousness. He is a drunkard, proud and insatiable, gathering all nations to himself. The spoiler shall be spoiled himself; the conquered nations shall utter a song against him.

2. And Jehovah answered me and said, write a vision and inscribe it upon the tablets, so that he may run (the one) reading in it. 3. For the vision is yet for the appointed time, and it shall pant for the end and not lie. Though it delay, wait for it. For it shall certainly come and not tarry.

4. Behold! Puffed up, not right, is his soul in him, and the

righteous by his faith shall live. 5. And moreover, because the wine is a robber, a mighty one, is arrogant, and will not dwell at home, who has widened as the grave his soul, and he is as death, and will not be satiated, and he has collected all nations unto him, and has gathered unto him all the peoples, 6. Shall not these all of them raise a song concerning it and a taunt, sharp sayings to it, and shall say?

6-20. The nations conquered and spoiled by the Chaldeans shall at length witness the fall of their conquerors, and join in a song expressive of their own feelings. It consists of five strophes, 6-8, 9-11, 12-14, 15-17, 18-20.

6. Aha! The nation multiplying (that which belongs) not to it; how long? and loading upon it a mass of pledges. 7. Shall not they that bite thee suddenly arise? and shall not they that shake thee awake, and thou be for spoils to them? 8. Because thou hast spoiled many nations, all the remnant of peoples shall spoil thee, on account of the blood-guilt of man, and the violence of land, city, and all dwelling in it.

9. Aha! The one plundering, plunder of evil, for his house, to set his nest on high, to deliver himself from the hand of evil. 10. Thou hast devised shame to thy house, the destroying of many nations, and those that sin against thy soul. 11. For the stone from the wall shall cry out; and the cross-beam from the timber shall answer it.

12. Aha! The one building a city in blood-guilt, and a town in crime. 13. Behold! is it not from Jehovah of Hosts, and nations toil just for the fire, and peoples weary themselves just for vanity? 14. For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah, as the waters shall cover the sea.

15. Aha! The one giving his neighbour drink, pouring out thy wrath, and even to intoxicate, in order to behold their nakedness. 16. Thou art satiated with shame from glory. Drink also thou and show thyself uncircumcised. The cup of the right hand of Jehovah shall turn it-

self unto thee, and ignominy shall be upon thy glory. 17. For the violence of Lebanon shall cover thee, and spoiling of beasts shall terrify them; on account of the blood-guilt of man, and violence of land, city and all dwelling in it.

18. What does it profit a graven image though its maker has graven it? a molten image and teacher of falsehood, though the maker of his work trusted upon it, to make dumb idols? 19. Aha! The one saying to the wood, awake! Arise, to the dumb stone; shall it teach? Behold! this is overlaid with gold and silver, and there is no spirit at all in the midst of it. 20. And Jehovah is in the temple of his holiness. Be silent before him all the earth.

Chapter 3. In this chapter the prophet gives us first its title. In verse 2, he prays in penitent faith, and expresses his desire for the advancement of God's work, and for an exhibition of His mercy. In verses 3-16, he renders glory to God for His wonderful and complete supremacy over all creation exerted for the good of His people; and in verses 17-19, he announces his entire submission to Jehovah's will and his confident expectation of good.

The title, verse 1. A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet upon shiggionoth.

His prayer, verse 2. Jehovah! I have heard the communication of thee. I am afraid. Jehovah! vivify thy work in the midst of the years; thou wilt make it known; in wrath thou wilt remember to be merciful.

3-16. The prophet glorifies the supreme Jehovah. 3. A god shall come from Teman, and a holy one from Mount Paran. Selah. His splendor has covered the heavens, and the earth is full of his praise. 4. And there shall be brightness as the light. He has horns from his hand, and there is the veiling of his strength. 5. Before him pestilence shall move on, and plague shall go out at his feet. 6. He stood and measured the earth; he looked and scattered nations; and the old mountains broke asunder, the hills of eternity sank; ways of eternity are to him. 7. I saw the tents of

Cushan under iniquity; the curtains of the land of Midian shall tremble. 8. Against the rivers has burned, Jehovah! against the rivers thine anger, against the sea thy wrath; for thou wilt ride upon thy horses, thy chariots of salvation. 9. In nakedness thy bow is made bare; sworn missiles is the word. Selah. With rivers thou wilt cleave earth. 10. The mountains saw thee, they trembled; the flood of waters has passed by; the abyss uttered its voice, lifted up its hands on high. 11. Sun, moon, stood in their habitation; at the light of thine arrows they shall go forth, at the brightness of the glittering of thy spear. 12. In indignation thou shalt march through the earth; in anger thou shalt trample the nations. 13. Thou hast gone out unto the salvation of thy people, unto the salvation of thine anointed; thou hast smitten the head from the house of the wicked, to lay bare the foundation unto the neck. Selah. 14. Thou hast pierced with his own missiles the head of his leaders; they shall rush on to scatter me; their rejoicing is as to devour the poor in a lurking place. 15. Thou hast passed through the sea with thine horses, through the boiling of many waters. 16. I heard and my belly trembled; at the voice my lips quivered; rottenness shall come into my bones, and under me I shall tremble, who shall rest unto a day of distress, to the going up of the people, he will invade him.

17-19. The prophet's submission to Jehovah's will, and his expectation of good. 17. For the fig tree shall not bloom, and no produce on the vines, the work of the olive has failed, and the fields not yielded food, the flock has been cut off from the fold, and no herd in the stalls. 18. And I will rejoice in Jehovah, and exult in the God of my salvation. 19. Jehovah, Lord, is my strength, and he has made my feet like hinds, he has caused me to walk on my heights.

19, last clause, The subscription. To the chief musician, on my stringed instruments.

COMMENTARY ON HABAKKUK.

CHAPTER I.

This chapter contains four paragraphs. The first (v. 1,) is the title of the book. The second (vs. 2-4,) contains the prophet's complaint to Jehovah because of His unconcern at the violence and crime prevailing in Judah. The third (vs. 5-11,) contains Jehovah's description of the instrument He has prepared for the punishment of Judah. The fourth (12-17,) contains the prophet's confidence in Jehovah's gracious purpose.

1. *The utterance which Habakkuk the prophet saw.* This is the title not of the first two chapters only, but of the whole book. The fact that the third chapter has a special title is not inconsistent with this statement, and the unity of the book strongly confirms it. The word *massa* which we have rendered "utterance" is regarded by some commentators as a mere synonym for other terms which are used to describe a prophetic communication such as "vision," "prophecy," (Newcomb.) All such interpretations are objectionable, because they pay no regard to the origin and usage of the word itself. The noun here used is derived from the verb *nasa*, which signifies "to lift up, to raise," and consequently means "that which is lifted up," and hence, "a burden." Some expositors, adopting the signification "burden," suppose that the term describes the following prophecy as a burdensome message given by Jehovah to the prophet, and borne by him to the people, (Poole, Gill, Cowles.) This interpretation is objectionable because we never meet with the word here translated "burden" associated with the name of a prophet. Others explain it to mean a burdensome or minatory prophecy, which announced the approach of divine judgments that would bring trouble and pain to its subjects, just as the burden does to the bearer, (Targum of Jonathan, Aquila in Syriac version,—

onus aut pondus—Jerome, Munsterus, Vatablus, Calvin, Grotius, Piscator, Cornelius a Lapide,—Last—Luther, Pagnini, Hesselberg, Hengstenberg, Schegg, Keil, Dutch Annotations, Westminster Annotations, English version, Trapp, Marburg, Henry, Scott, Benson, Sawyer, Peck, Robinson, Wordsworth, Pusey,—book, sentence—Henderson.) Commentators differ with regard to the bearer of the burden. Many express no opinion on this point. Some represent God as its bearer, burdened by the sins of His people. In order to illustrate this idea, Marburg refers to Amos 2: 13, “Behold! I am pressed under you as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves.” Compare Isa. 1: 14; Mal. 3: 17. Others regard the prophet as the bearer, inasmuch as he endured deep anxiety and apprehension in consequence of the revelation made to him, (Hurst, Gill, Cowles.) Others regard it as resting upon the Jews, (Calvin, Marburg, Hesselburg.) Others on both Jews and Gentiles, (Sawyer, Robinson.) And others still on all nations, (Keil, *et al.*) This interpretation is liable to the following objections: first, no version of the Old Testament possesses higher critical value than the Septuagint. It was made by Alexandrine Jews, whose native language was Hebrew. Whenever in the opinion of the Septuagint the word *massa* should be translated “burden” they interpret it by such terms as *nomos*, *anaphora*, *phortion*, *et al.* When the Hebrew word refers to any composition or utterance, it is translated by such words as *lemma*, *horasis*, *horama*, *rhema*, *et al.*, not one of which expresses the idea of a minatory prophecy, though all describe it as an inspired communication from God to man through His prophet. Secondly, several Hebrew words are used by the sacred writers as titles for their utterances. Among these are vision or prophecy, but these words are used to describe the prophecies that follow them, either as inspired by Jehovah or as uttered by the prophet as Jehovah’s agent. Not one of them expresses the effect produced by the prophecy of which it is the title, upon the minds of men. It is contrary

then to the analogy of Scripture to give it here the meaning of a threatening prophecy, i. e., a burden to those against whom it is directed. Thirdly, the meaning given to the word should be applicable in every case where it is used to describe a prophetic communication. It is, however, prefixed to prophecies which are not wholly minatory. Such is the case with this prophecy of Habakkuk. It predicts both joy and sorrow to both Chaldeans and Jews, and concludes with a theophany of Jehovah, from whose effects, the prophet learns the lesson of faith in Him in the most sorrowful circumstances. The book cannot therefore be correctly described as a minatory prophecy. Similar instances occur in Isa. 19: 1; 23: 5, where threatenings and comfort are closely mingled. It is remarkable also, that in one case at least, Zech. 12: 1, the prophecy which follows the title contains not a single sentence of a minatory character against Israel, who is the subject of the utterance, but its threatenings are directed against the enemies of Israel, and its whole tenor is consolatory to the chosen people of God. The word occurs also as the title of Proverbs, chapters 30 and 31, neither of which has a threatening character, but each consists of didactic statements of truth on various subjects. Fourthly, it is admitted that this word is usually followed by a threatening prophecy, but this can readily be accounted for when we remember that Jehovah is holy and just, and that His utterances relate to sinful men, who deserve to hear such statements. But the fact that this signification does not suit the word in all cases, shows that there must be another meaning which shall be applicable wherever it occurs as a prophetic communication. Finally, this word is interpreted to mean an utterance or enunciation of more importance than any statement made in ordinary conversation, and which consequently demands the attention of the hearer. It corresponds very closely to the word "deliverance," as used in such phrases as a deliverance of the Supreme Court or of the General Assembly, i. e., an im-

portant and authoritative enunciation, (—*effatum*,—Ackerman, Maurer, Rosenmueller, Anspruch, Theiner, Delitzsch, Umbreit, Phillipsen, De Wette, Hitzig,—*Hochspruch*—Ewald.) This interpretation agrees accurately with the derivation and usage of the word. The verb *nasa* has the signification of “to utter” in all phrases which refer to anything spoken, such as “to lift up a voice, a cry, the name of the Lord, a prayer, a lamentation; a parable, a psalm, a reproach, Ps. 15: 3; Ex. 20: 7; Hab. 2: 6; Num. 23: 7; Isa. 14: 4. It never in such cases signifies “to threaten.” The meaning “utterance” is applicable to the original word wherever it occurs. It is consequently to be regarded as its true rendering. It describes the succeeding prophecy as an important and authoritative annunciation. This word is limited sometimes by the word “Jehovah,” sometimes by the phrase, “the word of Jehovah,” sometimes by the names of the lands or nations to which it refers, and sometimes, as in the present instance, by a descriptive clause. It is here said to be the utterance which the prophet Habakkuk saw. It is that part of the whole prophetic revelation which he, as God’s messenger, was commissioned to declare to men. (See remarks on his life and office in the Introduction.) Abarbanel notices the fact that the designation “prophet” is applied to only three of the minor prophets, viz., Haggai, Zechariah, and Habakkuk, and gives as his reason for it, that in their prophecies the phrases “The word of the Lord came, Thus saith the Lord,” &c., so common in the writings of other inspired men, do not occur, and hence the specific designation prophet is applied to them, in the title of the book.—Vision was one of the methods by which God communicated His will to men. While under the influence of the Spirit, the mind of the prophet was abstracted from all other objects, and fixed upon the things seen, while his body often seemed asleep. This was a common method of inspiration. Hence prophets were at first called “seers,” and the verb “to see” was generally used to express the

perception of truth by inspiration. This prophetic vision differs from natural sight, from the operation of the natural reason, and from the spiritual illumination by which the believer sees the beauty, force and applicability of the truth. It describes the effect produced by the Holy Ghost upon men, when He communicates truth to their minds, and controls them while uttering the Word of God to others. Habakkuk here claims such inspiration for himself, and a place for his book in the written Word of God.

2-4. The prophet complains to Jehovah of His apparent unconcern, though crime prevails in Judah. *How long, Jehovah, have I cried, and thou wilt not hear! (how long) shall I cry out unto thee, Violence, and thou wilt not save?* The prophet speaks as the representative of Israel, not of the common people or *vulgus*, but of the pious in Israel, the members of God's household, who were compelled to live in the midst of abounding sin, and shared in its evil consequences.—Jehovah is the self-existent, eternal, and unchangeable God, the God of revelation and the covenant God of His people. This name of God was originally written "Yahaveh," which is the third person future of the Hebrew verb "to be, *havah*." It was regarded by the Hebrews as peculiarly sacred, and was pronounced only by the high priest when he entered into the Holy of Holies. Where it occurs in the Scriptures, the Jews substituted one of the other names of God for it. In order to indicate this the vowels of the substituted name were written in connection with the consonants of the word "Yahaveh." We therefore generally pronounce it by the aid of the vowels of *Adhonai*, the ordinary word for "Lord." Habakkuk's language implies that the condition of things which induced him to cry for help had already existed for a long time, and was so desperate that nothing but the interference of Yahaveh could afford relief. This is indicated both by the appeal to Yahaveh, and by the mingling of the past and future tenses of the verbs in his complaint. They are used to express

intense feeling. The violence of which he complains is not that of the Chaldeans, as Hitzig thinks. For their invasion was still future, and is not announced to the prophet in Jehovah's reply to his complaint. It is intended to designate the abuse of power manifested in oppressive acts of cruelty and injustice throughout the Kingdom of Judah in public and private. This term is used in Gen. 6: 11-13, to describe the moral condition of things before the flood, and in Ps. 18: 48, it describes the conduct of David's enemies. Its nature and effects are described in verses 2-4. The indifference of Jehovah to the cry of the prophet is expressed, first, by His not hearing, and secondly, by His not saving the prophet and his people. God is the covenant God of Israel, able to save, and engaged to help them in times of trouble. The people of God often think His ear closed against their petitions, and His hand unwilling to save, and on this account the prophet appeals to Jehovah. His cry, though earnest and importunate, was hitherto unavailing. For God did not yet interfere to remove the causes of his solicitude. Jehovah, because He is what He is, is the only refuge of His people in time of trouble. He does not, however, always answer prayer when we offer it, or give us just what we desire. The people of God are appointed unto affliction, and in infinite wisdom He never removes it from them until the proper time comes.

3. *Why wilt thou show me iniquity, and why wilt thou behold trouble? Oppression and violence are before me, and strife has existed, and contention will raise itself.* The particle "why," i. e., "to what extent and for what purpose," may be supplied before each clause of the verse, though it is perhaps better to regard its influence as extending only to the first two clauses. The prophet first traces the origin of the present condition of things to iniquity, and then describes it as trouble. He declares with reference to iniquity, first, that God permitted it to abound, and placed the prophet in a position where he must see it.

The word translated "iniquity" means originally, "nonentity," then "the absence of all goodness," then negatively, "un-righteousness," or positively, "wickedness," "iniquity," and more specifically "injustice, falsehood." Here the more general sense is preferable, which is then rendered more specific in the third clause, "why wilt thou then behold trouble?" This is preferable to the translation of the King James version, and of Newcomb and Rosenmueller, "and cause me to behold grievance," for the reason that the verb *tabhit* is never used elsewhere in a causative sense. It is also used elsewhere, e. g., in Isaiah, to express "looking at with indifference." "To behold" signifies here "to look upon without interfering to prevent it." This second ground of complaint is, that Jehovah regarded their trouble only as a careless and indifferent spectator, which God really seems to do, (Hitzig and Hengstenberg). The word translated "trouble" means originally "toil, labor," and then, like the corresponding Greek and Latin words *ponos* and *labor*, means "trouble." It is related to the noun in the preceding clause, as the effect to cause. These nouns are frequently used elsewhere in the same relation. This trouble is further described by the terms "oppression and violence." Jarchi interprets "iniquity," as "plundering, laying waste." Aben-Ezra interprets it, "men of iniquity," i. e., the Chaldeans, "wherefore dost thou look upon, nor bring aid; wherefore dost thou permit me to see the devastation of the barbarian enemy, and not bring aid?" The iniquity mentioned in the first clause, is here expressed more specifically. While iniquity in all its forms prevailed, the abuse of power in acts of oppression and injustice was most prominent. They were before him in the sense of being openly and frequently committed, so that, as it were, he could not look without seeing them, and though a prophet, notwithstanding all his remonstrances, exhortations, and reproofs. (Gill.) Strife and contention are the most prominent elements in the prophet's idea of trouble; strife refers

to all differences both public and private, and contentions to the quarrels and disputes that follow them. The last verb is the root from which the noun *massa* in verse 1 is derived. It means that contention makes itself a prominent object of view, obtrudes itself on one's notice. Sin and trouble are closely bound together in the administration of God's government as cause and effect, or as labor and its reward; one sin often leads to another. Oppression and violence are represented here as the precursor of strife and contention. One sin may sometimes be the penalty of another sin. The strife and contention, while in themselves sinful, were the punitive consequence of their oppression and violence. Though God seems to us to look on our sins and troubles with indifference, yet, as the sequel of this prophecy shows, He will vindicate His own glory in His own time and way. Might does not make right.

4. *Therefore law shall be torpid, and judgment will not go forth to purity; for the wicked is encompassing the righteous, wherefore judgment shall go forth perverted.* "Therefore," i. e., because thou, Jehovah, will not interfere to prevent this evil and distressing state of affairs. Law is the rule of duty. In Judah, the law of Moses was its written representative. It was both the civil and religious code of the nation, and is here described as dormant, paralyzed, inoperative. It was neither observed as a rule of duty, nor executed as the index of punishment to evil doers. "*And judgment goes not forth to purity.*" The administration of justice does not terminate in the establishment of right. A parallel passage is found Isa. 42: 3, where the Messiah is said to "bring forth judgment unto truth," i. e., so as to establish truth instead of falsehood. Others interpret this clause as in our version "judgment never goes forth," and others, "judgment does not go forth," by truth. Whichever interpretation be adopted, the sense remains the same, that the administration of the law does not result in the establishment of that which is pure and right, and in the con-

demnation of the wicked. The prophet assigns the secondary cause of the state of things described in the preceding clauses. This was the fact, that the wicked surrounded the righteous, as enemies encompass a besieged city. The wicked surpass the righteous in number, repress their good influence, and treat them as enemies, wherefore judgment is perverted, a repetition of the sentiment of the second clause, as the consequence of the multitude, power, and hatred of the wicked. While Jehovah delays to execute His judgments, the hearts of men are fully set in them to do evil, and while iniquity abounds, the love of many waxes cold, and the law of God becomes powerless to guide in the way of duty or restrain from crime.

5-11. Jehovah replies to the complaint of the prophet. 5. Jehovah directs the attention of the prophet and his people to His marvellous work among the nations, which is so strange as to be incredible. 6. This work is God's raising up the Chaldeans as the instrument for punishing Israel. This is a bitter and impetuous people which marches through the breadth of the earth. 7. They are terrible and dreadful; their supremacy is entire. 8. Their cavalry are fierce and swift, and soon cover the land. 9. Their object shall be violence, and they shall gather many captives. 10. They shall scoff at mighty men and strongholds. 11. They shall transgress, imputing their power to their god.

5. *Behold ye among the peoples, and regard, and be greatly astonished! For a work working in your days, ye will not believe, though it be told.* God speaks in this paragraph, and the verbs are in the plural because He addresses both the prophet and the people of Judah, whom he represents. Jehovah proposes a remedy for the present state of affairs, which is remarkable, because it corresponds so exactly with what has already been said in the preceding verses. The prophet has described what he has seen, and expresses his amazement. God now bids him look again,

and be amazed at the plan which Jehovah Himself has already adopted to remove the trouble. The prophet's attention is directed to the surrounding nations, where the indications of God's plan may already be seen. His view must no longer be confined to his past experience, nor to the condition of his own land, but embrace Syria, Assyria, Babylonia, Egypt, and all their dependencies. In these lands the agencies are already at work that will accomplish God's purposes. These purposes are wonderful in their nature, marvellous in their consummation, and amazing in their effects. The reduplication of verbs of similar signification in the first hemistich, conveys the sentiment that Jehovah regards the object which He points out, as one of great importance and deserving their most earnest attention. The reason assigned for this duty is the marvellousness of the work going on in their days. No personal pronoun is used, as in the English Bible, to describe the author of this work, which must be regarded as the object of the verb translated "ye will not believe." This work includes many particulars, involving all that was requisite in the chastisement of one nation by another. Here it embraces the overthrow of the Assyrian Empire, the conquest of Philistia and Palestine by Egypt, the rise of the Babylonian Empire, the expulsion of the Egyptians from Carchemish, and the invasion of Judah by the Chaldeans. This work is described as in actual progress "in your days." The unusual expression a "work working" suggests the thought that this work is not completed, but is daily advancing to its consummation, which would be reached in the days of that generation. The phraseology of the next verse, "Behold me raising up the Chaldeans," while it explains the nature of the work, also asserts the present and continued activity of Jehovah in its execution. Even while His people sinned, suffered, and complained, the God of providence was exerting His energies in doing that which, when accomplished, would be worthy of Himself, and exactly suited to the cir-

cumstances of His people. The expression "a work working in your days" may be illustrated by such phrases as "the leaven leavening the whole lump," "to see a house building" "to hear a train running." In every case when a participle governs an object, whether it be a noun or a clause, the participle precedes the object. Chapter 2: 5, 6; 2: 9; 2: 12; 2: 15; 2: 18; 2: 19. In no case does the participle follow the object. The expression "in your days" may comprise a whole lifetime of seventy years, but it more frequently describes a period of forty years as the duration of a generation. The generation which Moses brought out of Egypt lived but forty years, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb. Num. 14: 33; 32: 13; Acts 13: 18; Joshua 5: 6. It seems very appropriate to the circumstances of the case that the Lord should employ the same time in preparing Judah for their expulsion from the land of Canaan, that was occupied in preparing Israel for their entrance into that land. The condition on which Israel should possess and enjoy the land of Canaan was, obedience to the law of God. 2 Kings 21: 8. The cup of Judah's iniquity became full in the days of Manasseh. The sins of both king and people were so great, that they rendered it necessary that God should remove them out of His sight. 2 Kings 24: 3; 21: 2-9. The pious life of Josiah, and the reformation which he effected, were not sufficient to turn the Lord from the fierceness of His great wrath wherewith His anger was kindled against Judah, because of the provocation wherewith Manasseh had provoked him withal, 2 Kings 23: 26; 2 Chron. 34: 22. If then the invasion of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar occurred B. C. 608, the term of forty years would extend to B. C. 648, four years before the close of Manasseh's reign, a time exactly adapted to the nature and purpose of Habakkuk's prophecy. It would include all the particulars already mentioned as belonging to this work. Inspired records of Jewish history, though they do not mention Habakkuk, speak of the prophets "in those days," in terms which ex-

actly describe Habakkuk and his work, 2 Kings 21: 10, and all their prophecies correspond with Jewish history between B. C. 648 and 608. This announcement would be so marvellous as to be incredible both to the prophet and his people. The work itself would require all the laborious effort implied in an invasion and conquest of Judah by another nation, and it seemed utterly inconsistent with the idea that Judah was the chosen people of God, an idea which had been cherished by them for many centuries past. The reason assigned for the marvellousness of their unbelief is, "for it shall be told." There would be no lack of information, which would excuse their unbelief. God would tell them all that they needed to know, and that which He revealed to them would certainly be fulfilled. Consequently they might well be amazed at what they saw and heard.

6. *For behold me, raising up the Chaldeans, the bitter and hasty nation, the one going unto the breadths of the earth to possess the dwelling-places (that belong) not to it.* "For behold me, raising up." The word "for" introduces the proof of the declaration that God was at work, however incredible it might seem to them. The attention of the people is directed first, to the worker, secondly, to the peculiar nature of the work itself, and thirdly, to the instrument by which it shall be performed. The worker is the Jehovah unto whom the prophet makes his complaint in verse 2, who is not only the self-existent and eternal God, and the covenant God of Israel, but also the God who reigns among the nations of the earth. "No man hath seen God at any time," but men may still behold him intellectually and spiritually by the proper improvement of reason and of spiritual gifts. The participle translated "raising up," is active, and refers to what God is now doing among the nations of the earth. It implies that He has already selected and appointed the Chaldeans as His agents. It represents Jehovah as actually engaged in preparing them to act their destined part in the accomplishment of His designs. It asserts that God is now

qualifying them for it, and inciting or permitting them to enter on it at the proper time and in the proper way, and that when they had entered on it, He would direct, assist, and overrule them. The signification by many interpreters of "rousing" or "exciting" is too limited. For Jehovah is a wise, mighty and omniscient Sovereign, in whose government the preparation of means of punishment is contemplated in connection with the commission of sin. The punishment itself is in entire accordance with the law of God, and its infliction accomplishes God's penal purposes. The people whom Jehovah raises up are called "Chaldeans" or, as it is written in Hebrew, *Casdim*. This name is plural in form, and is by many interpreters derived from the name of their ancestor Chesed, who was Abraham's nephew, Gen. 22: 22. Ewald and others refer the name of *Casdim* to that of Arphaxad, an ancestor of Abraham, mentioned in Gen. 10:22. Oppert supposes that the name is of Tartaric origin, and signifies, "two rivers," and therefore describes the region known as Mesopotamia. The Chaldeans were the subjects of the kingdom whose capital was Babylon. Their origin and early history are shrouded in the mists of antiquity. The earliest Scriptural reference to them is contained in Gen. 11: 28, where Abraham is paid to have been brought out from Ur of the Chaldees. They are said by Xenophon to have dwelt in the mountains of Armenia or Kurdistan, while in sacred history we meet with them only as inhabitants of the plain of Shinar. These apparently contradictory statements are reconciled by supposing them to have been a nomadic tribe of mountaineers whose original home was Armenia, and whose name was analogous with that of the Kurds, and that part of the tribe either emigrated voluntarily to Babylonia, or was taken captive and transferred thither by the victorious Assyrians, according to their usual method of dealing with conquered nations. The theory of their deportation by the Assyrians agrees well with the language of Isaiah 23: 13,

"Behold the Chaldeans! this people was not, until the Assyrians tounded it for them that dwell in the wilderness." Having become domesticated in the plain of Shinar, they threw off the yoke of the Assyrians, and became independent. They were still, however, under the dominion of Assyria during the reign of Manasseh, II Chron. 33: 11, and, in connection with the Medes, destroyed Nineveh, B. C. 625. They were a bold and martial people, and soon extended their dominions far and wide, rapidly becoming the dominant power among the surrounding nations. But their history is obscure until the days of Nabopolassar and his son Nebuchadnezzar, whose name appears more frequently in sacred history than any other monarch of Babylon. The Chaldeans are here described, first, in general terms as a "bitter and hasty nation." As a bitter substance communicates its own bitterness to our tongues, so the Chaldeans produce bitterness of heart in those with whom they come in contact. They disregard the comfort, peace, happiness and rights of individuals and nations. Their government is autocratic. They are selfish, fierce and cruel. They distress their fellow-men by communicating to individuals, disappointment, sorrow, pain and death; by bringing upon their armies, disaster and defeat; by overthrowing nations, by slaying their rulers, and by deporting captive nations. Thus they created in others that bitterness of spirit which made life a burden. The Chaldeans were a "hasty" nation. This implies, first, that they were rapid in their movements, their armies made speedy advances upon their enemies, and secondly, that they were energetic, vehement, irascible, impetuous, always ready to avenge a wrong, or to secure any advantage over their fellow-men. Their ferocity and impetuosity are also found combined as their most striking characteristics, in the prophetic symbol of the Babylonian kingdom, namely, "the lion with eagle's wings," Dan 7: 4. The appropriateness of this description may be seen both in the operations of the

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government, and in the acts of individuals. Several circumstances are recorded in Scripture confirming the correctness of this description. Thus, the treatment of Zedekiah and his family by their captors, II. Chron. 26 : 17; the deportation of captive nations, the threat of Nebuchadnezzar against the magicians, Dan. 2: 10-13; the casting of the three young men into the fiery furnace, Dan. 3: 19-20; the slaughter of the young men, II. Chron. 34: 17; the destruction of Jerusalem, II. Chron. 34: 19; may be cited as appropriate illustrations. After this short and striking portrait, the Lord points out the various features that compose it, and exhibits it as presenting a fit instrument for the execution of His plans. The first of these is that the Chaldean nation is "the one going to the breadths of the earth, to possess the dwellings that belong not to it," traversing the broad lands of the earth unto its utmost limits. The word translated "earth" should not be confined, as in the authorized English version, to the land of Judah, but embraces the whole world, and the phrase "the breadths of the earth" includes not merely its broad plains or wide places but its entire surface in every direction to its farthest boundaries. So the phrase "the depths of the sea" describes its waters to its very bottom. The plural form of the word "breadths" possibly contains a reference to the ancient geographical idea that the world had a level surface of unknown extent, and the nation is here said to make progress in every direction, north, south, east and west, until it reaches the ends of the earth. Its designs are accompanied by the irresistible progress of its power, and its victorious armies secure the dwellings that belong not to it. God is sovereign of nations, and manages them so as to accomplish His purposes in His own time and way. He punishes nations by natural and temporal calamities. His instruments for the chastisement of sin are often in course of preparation even while the sinner is in course of transgression. His wisdom is displayed also in the adaptation of means to the accom-

plishment of the end. When He would punish Judah, He raises up the Chaldeans to do it for Him.

7. *Terrible and dreadful (is it), from itself its judgment and its dignity shall go forth.* The people is autocratic, and its own will is its law. It is an object of terror and dread, because it possesses the character ascribed to it in the context. The word "judgment" must here signify the administration of justice. The word "dignity" means its majesty or supremacy over others. In all judicial matters, it is despotic, acknowledging no law but its own will. Its dignity is the fruit of its own exertions, and is maintained by its own ability. The verb "shall go forth" is in the third person singular of the future tense. The use of a verb in the singular, with two subjects connected by a conjunction, shows that the two subjects belong to the same class of things, and may be included in one common expression, such as the following: his supremacy both as judge and lord is autocratic, self-derived, and self-maintained. The future tense implies that such is its character now, and such it will continue to be in the future. The despotism of the Chaldean rule is matter of history.

8. *And swifter than leopards are its horses, and more fierce than the wolves of evening; and its horsemen sweep proudly on, and its horsemen shall come from afar; they shall fly like an eagle hastening to eat.* In Judah the horse was comparatively rare. The Mosaic law, Deut. 16: 17, positively forbade the kings of Judah to multiply horses. Among the surrounding nations, however, they were more extensively reared and more generally employed, and consequently constituted a much larger element in national wealth and power. They are never mentioned among the beasts of burden, but allusion is often made to their employment for military purposes. They are introduced into the description of the Chaldeans, because cavalry was so important an arm of service in their army, while in that of Judah it was so insignificant. The leopard is an animal

of the cat kind, noted for its swiftness. It is more spirited, mettlesome, and keen than the wolf, surpassing it in speed, courage, and endurance. The wolf remains in his den during the day, and prowls about for food during the evening and night. This habit of the animal has given rise to some singular proverbial expressions in various languages. Thus the twilight is called by the Arabs and Persians, "the tail of the wolf," and by the French, "the period entre chien et loup," i. e., the time between the dog and the wolf. In the evening the wolf, hungry after his day's fast, would be far keener in the pursuit of his prey than in the morning. "And its horsemen." The original word for "horsemen" is applied sometimes to the horse, and sometimes to its rider. Henderson, to imitate this peculiarity, translates this clause "his horse shall spread proudly along." The signification "horsemen, cavalry," is appropriate here, and is indeed the theme of the whole verse. For the horses mentioned in the first clause are those of the Chaldean's cavalry. The Hebrew verb *push*, translated "*sweep proudly on*," probably corresponds in significance with the analogous Arabic verb, which means "to act proudly, to prance, to curvet." The whole tenor of the passage suggests the idea of a bold, rapid and forward movement. "And its horsemen shall come from afar." The verb "come" implies approach to the land of Judah, where Jehovah had His especial dwelling. They make long and rapid journeys with as little weariness as the eagle. See Deut. 28: 49, 50; Jer. 5: 15. The eagle's strong pinions never weary in pursuit of his prey, however great the distance at which his piercing eye may discover it. The particular species of the animals mentioned here, cannot and need not be accurately determined, because the qualities ascribed to them, are not peculiarities of individuals, but are possessed by the whole family to which they belong. The predatory nature of the animals suggests the additional thought that the Chaldeans are fierce and rapacious marauders.

9. *Its all shall come for violence, the desire of their faces is forward, and it shall gather the captivity like sand.* "Its all, (they all) shall come," &c. The singular form of the word "all" expresses the totality of the nation better than a plural would do. (Delitzsch.) Calvin thinks that the phrase, "come for the prey" implies that they would have no trouble or labor, for they would be victorious before they had any contest. The cruel rapacity of the Chaldeans, which was already suggested by the character of the animals to which they are compared in verse 8, is here definitely expressed. The whole available force of the nation shall be engaged in the invasion of Judah, and be irresistably victorious. On the word "violence," see verse 2. "The desire of their faces," &c. This clause in Hebrew consists of three words, of which the first and the last are very variously interpreted. The first word occurs nowhere else, and the last is rendered by some, "forward towards that which is in front;" by others "eastward" (Dutch Anno. and West. Anno.); and by others "an east wind." The signification "eastward" is adopted by Abarbanel, who thinks the passage refers to the return of the Chaldean army loaded with the spoils of Judah; and also by Hitzig and others, who explain it by supposing an eastward march of their army after entering the Jewish territory near the Mediterranean. Their interpretations, however, do not agree with the scope of the passage, and probable route of the army. The signification "eastward" is well suited to the context, but it never has this meaning unless the word "wind" is added in the original, and this is wanting here. The first word in this clause is rendered first, "desire," secondly, "gathering host, or troop," thirdly, "aspect, or direction," fourthly, "absorption, or supping up." We prefer the first, because it expresses the idea common to several of the renderings, and corresponds to the signification of the similar Arabic verb. The clause then expresses the sentiment that the faces of the Chaldeans glow with a longing desire to possess and en-

joy the booty which was just in front of them. "And it shall gather the captivity," &c. The captivity means the captives. These should be as numerous as the sand; and perhaps the figure also implies that they should be gathered with as little resistance as sand.

10. *And this (people) shall scoff at kings, and princes shall be a derision unto it. It shall deride every fortress, and it will heap up earth and take it.* The people described in the foregoing context, the Chaldeans, shall look with contempt upon all that oppose it, however high in station and mighty in resources. "This" refers not only to the kings and nobles of the Jews, but those of all nations whither the Chaldeans may set their faces. "Derision" is used here to express an object of derision. "He shall deride," &c. His military skill shall be so superior to that of other nations, that he shall regard every attempt at self-defence as worthy only of mockery.—"And it will heap up," &c. This mode of assault was also practised by the Romans. A mound of earth (Latin, *agger*,) was raised before the walls of a besieged city, on which the battering engines were erected. It was gradually extended toward the walls, through the addition of new materials, and when a break was made in the walls, it formed a path for the entrance of the besieging army. The instruments which God employs for the execution of His purposes are irresistible.

11. *Then it has changed spirit, and transgressed, and become guilty. This his power is for his god.* Many interpretations have been made of the first clause, of which the following specimens are given: "then shall his mind change," (Auth. Vers.); "then shall he sweep by as a wind," (Revised Vers.); "then his spirit reviveth, or renews itself," (Gesenius); "then its courage becomes young again, or grows;" "then he shall pass along as a wind," (Keil); "dann fahrt es dahin ein Sturm," (De Wette); "then it gaineth fresh spirit," (Henderson); Isaiah 24: 5, "because they have transgressed the laws, then its spirit revives," (Schaff).

The word "then" in the beginning of this verse may indicate a point of either time or space. Keil prefers the latter, but most interpreters think it designates the point of time at which a change occurs in the affairs of the Chaldeans, after executing the will of Jehovah upon the surrounding nations and having attained supremacy among them. The nation has changed its spirit. It has become proud and self-confident. Once, under Assyrian control, it became independent and self-reliant, but in consequence of its long-continued and unvarying prosperity, independence and self-reliance became self-worship. After the conquest of Judah, it engaged but seldom in foreign wars. The verbs of the second and third clauses describe the consequences of this change of spirit. It transgresses the allotted bounds and becomes guilty. This word "transgress" in the original combines the ideas of sin and punishment, and these two are so intimately connected in the divine government, that they cannot be dissociated. Sin and guilt are here closely connected in the language of the Lord, and guilt is liability to punishment. "This his power is for his god." Its power has now become its god, the very might which it has received from Jehovah as a talent to be employed in His service, has been adopted and worshipped as its god. The prophet seizes upon this fact and urges it powerfully, in the following appeal to Jehovah, see verses 15-17. The truth of this prophecy is finely illustrated in the history of Nebuchadnezzar, who may be regarded as the representative man and monarch of the Chaldean race. Glorifying in the strength of his own arm, he says: "Is not this great Babylon," &c. His sin is immediately punished by the God whose prerogatives he has assumed. It is also illustrated in the history of Belshazzar, the last in the line of the Chaldean kings, who closes his reign and passes beyond his allotted bounds by a public insult to the God of Israel. Daniel 5.

DOCTRINES.

1. The supreme sovereignty of Jehovah, vs. 5-11; Ex. 20:3.

2. So long as the wicked remain within bounds, God may use them as His instruments, but when they exalt themselves against Him, they become the objects of His wrath.

3. The means which God employs are always sufficient to accomplish the end He desires, and they are often at work while their operation is concealed from the minds of men, verses 5-10.

4. Prosperity begets pride; pride induces the heart in which it is found to set the object of its pride in the place of God, and worship it as God.

1: 12-17. In this paragraph, the prophet expresses his assurance that God would raise up the Chaldeans for the chastisement, and not for the destruction, of His people, because the Chaldeans were less deserving of His favors than the Jews. Jehovah is the covenant God of the Jews, who will give life to His own people, and use the Chaldeans for purposes of chastisement. He is too holy, and sympathizes too closely with His people to send needless trouble upon them. Yet Jehovah will treat His people as irrational animals which become an easy prey to their pursuers. But the Chaldeans conquer nations as the fisherman gathers fish. They then offer to their implements of warfare divine honors. Will then Jehovah permit them forever to continue in their selfish and wicked course?

12. *Art thou not from eternity, Jehovah? My God, my Holy one, we shall not die, Jehovah! for judgment hast thou set him; and Rock! for chastisement hast thou ordained him.* Awed by the fearful description of the nation that should be employed by Jehovah in the vindication of His own honor, and conscious of the helplessness of himself and of his people, the prophet pronounces his belief that though he and his people may be chastised, they will not be destroyed. The grounds of his confidence are expressed both in his mode of address, and in his plea, "Art thou not from eternity." The signification of the word "Jehovah," has already

been given, verse 2. The Hebrew word *Elohim* describes God as the supreme object of worship. In turning away from the god of the Chaldeans mentioned in verse 11, and in addressing Jehovah as his God, the prophet appeals to the relation existing between God and His worshippers, which makes it right and appropriate for Him to favor them. The expression "my Holy One" describes Jehovah as a Being of spotless purity. This attribute renders it certain that He will deal kindly with those in whom His own holy image has been created, and will punish their enemies and His because they are unholy. The prophet's argument consists in an appeal to the eternity of Jehovah. If He be eternal, then He is also the only living and unchangeable God, of Whom are all things, and Who is especially the Giver of life. From these premises the prophet draws the conclusion "we shall not die." The scribes say that this is one of eighteen passages in the Old Testament, in which Ezra and his colleagues corrected the ancient text. The alteration here is alleged to be from "thou shalt not die" to "we shall not die." The change however is altogether improbable. The prophet appropriately describes the expected blessing as one that belongs to the people whom he represents, and this accounts for the fact that the verb in this clause is in the plural number. A God like Jehovah will not destroy His own covenant, His own saints. Many interpreters, instead of making "Jehovah" a vocative, make the word predicate of the sentence, and read it: "Art thou not from eternity Jehovah?" Either version suits the connection well. The prophet, after asserting his expectation that he and his people shall not die, describes the Chaldeans as ordained for the accomplishment of a particular purpose. "Thou hast made them what they are, and appointed them to be a scourge, in order that the demands of justice may be satisfied, and thy people chastised for their sins." Chastisement, however, does not imply their destruction. Jehovah is called a "Rock," because He is the

refuge and defence of His people, being eternal, immutable and almighty. Jehovah is the God who makes all things work together for the good of His people and the punishment of His enemies. The afflictions of His people are temporal chastisements, not eternal punishments. Jehovah possesses such attributes as fit Him both for blessing His people and punishing His enemies.

13. *Thou art of purer eyes than to look upon evil, and to behold trouble thou wilt not be able. Wherefore wilt thou behold spoilers? Wilt thou keep silence, while the wicked swallows up him that is more righteous than he?* God, who is a Spirit, is described as possessing the members of the human body, in order to aid us in our conception of His character. As we instinctively avert our eyes from that which is hateful, so the holiness of God is opposed to that which is sinful, and His mercy to undeserved trouble. The words "to behold trouble" are used precisely as in verse 3, to express the thought that Jehovah cannot look with indifference upon the troubles of His people, even when they have been occasioned by their own sin. Sin and trouble are always closely connected in the government of God. Since God possesses so pure eyes, the question is asked, why wilt Thou be a careless spectator, while the marauding Chaldeans are laying waste the earth? Why be silent and unconcerned, while the wicked Chaldeans are destroying the Jews among whom are the only righteous ones of earth, and who as a nation are more righteous than the Chaldeans? The same attributes of God which call for the punishment of His people, as the prophet has already declared in verse 3, demand more imperatively the punishment of the Chaldeans, because they would be greater sinners and occasion greater trouble than the Israelites.

14. *And make man as the fishes of the sea, as the creeping things over which there is no ruler?* The *vav* conversive at the beginning of this verse connects it with the latter clauses of the preceding verse, so that it continues the description

of Jehovah's threatened treatment of the Israelitish people. The prophet pleads that the predicted punishment is inconsistent with the true nature of man, whom God made in His own image. By abandoning men to Chaldean oppression, and not interfering to prevent it, Thou, Jehovah, wilt degrade them to the position of the irrational inhabitants of the sea, who have no protector, and consequently fall an easy prey to their pursuers. The creeping things are those animals whose home is in the sea, Ps. 104: 25; Ps. 69: 34. God is here said to do what He permits to be done.

15. *Its all has lifted up with hook; it will catch him with its net, and gather them with its seine; therefore will it rejoice and exult.* In the preceding verses, the work of Jehovah has been described, in verses 12-14, and now the Chaldean nation is presented as fulfilling His purpose. The verb of the first clause is a preterite, and expresses what Jehovah has done and is now doing through Chaldean agency. In the days of Manasseh Judah had been conquered by them, and Manasseh carried a prisoner to Babylon. Other conquests had been made, with apparently as much ease as the fish is drawn from the water by the hook. The phrase "its all" is used exactly as in verse 9, to describe the whole Chaldean nation with its skillful leaders, its mighty armies, and its immense resources. That which had been done by them at the point of time indicated by the first clause should be surpassed in time to come. The verbs of the second and third clauses are in the future tense, and both verbs and nouns express the idea of progress, both in the instruments and success of their military expeditions. They who have raised fish with the hook, shall do more and greater things with their gradually increasing ability. In so doing they shall treat Israel especially as irrational creatures, and of this fact the prophet desires to complain to Jehovah. Their efforts are so successful that they rejoice and exult over their victories, their spoils, their captives, and their supremacy. In the mean time Judah shall lie

helpless at their mercy. God never fails to provide suitable and efficient means for the accomplishment of His ends.

16. *Wherefore it will sacrifice to its net, and burn incense to its seine, for by them its portion is fat, and its food is fattened meat.* The result of their military operations was abundant prosperity, which is represented here by a large supply of food. In consequence of their success the Chaldeans will pay divine honor to the two instruments which contributed most to their prosperity, and were the appropriate emblems of their power. They would thus prove themselves to be idolaters unworthy of the favor of the only true God. Rosenmueller thinks the passage may be illustrated by reference to the ancient custom of worshipping those pieces of offensive armor by which victory had been gained. He quotes Justin 43: 3, who says "from the very origin of history the ancients worshipped spears as immortal gods, in memory of which, spears are to this day added to the images of the gods." Lucian in *Tragoediae* says: "The Scythians indeed sacrifice to their scimitars." Arnovius ad gentes, 6, preserves the tradition that in ancient times the nations of Scythia worshipped the scimitar. Ammianus Marcellinus, 17: 12, and Schaff, (Herodotus, 4: 59: 62,) state that the Sarmatians were accustomed to offer annually a sacrifice to a sabre set up as a representative of Man. We have, however, no certain proof that the custom prevailed among the Chaldeans. The passage is probably designed to express the same thought as the last clause of verse 11, that is, he has no god but his own power.

17. *Shall it therefore empty its net, and continually spare not to destroy the nations?* Having thus described the Chaldeans as a selfish and wicked conqueror, the prophet asks whether God will permit the Chaldeans to go on in this course continually. To "empty the net" signifies to gather in the spoils of conquest, and at the same time prepare for further acquisitions. Some interpreters think there is a reference to the Chaldean custom of removing

the captive nations from their own homes, and transplanting them to some other portion of the Chaldean empire. This, however, would limit the meaning of the expression too narrowly. The question implies a negative answer. God may use the wicked as His instrument for a while, yet His character renders it impossible that they should long remain unpunished.

CHAPTER II.

1. The author declares his purpose to place himself where he can hear the voice of Jehovah, and offer his reply. 2. Jehovah bids the prophet write his vision in a permanent form, put it in a prominent place, and depend upon its fulfillment. 3. This will be in its appointed time; it will be complete and speedy. 4. Jehovah describes the Chaldean as proud and fierce. Obedience to the law of the Lord will alone secure righteousness. 5. He is a drunkard, proud and insatiable, gathering all nations to himself. 6. The spoiler shall be spoiled himself; the conquered nations shall utter a song. The song is continued through the rest of the chapter in five strophes, each of which contains three verses. The first (vs. 6-8,) describes the Chaldean as a covetous miser, whose burden is worthless. The result shall be spoiling and oppression. The cause will be his bloodguiltiness and his violence everywhere. The second strophe (vs. 9-11,) designates him as an avaricious conqueror. The results of his conduct are shame and guilt. The reason for this is that the conquered and helpless will cry out for justice. The third strophe (vs. 12-14,) represents the Chaldean as a builder of a city in blood and iniquity. The Lord's interposition shall render his labors useless, because the Lord designs to fill the earth with His own glory. The fourth strophe (vs. 15-17,) describes the

Chaldean as one who giveth his neighbor drink, that he may gratify himself with his shame. The result shall be the cup of Jehovah's wrath. The reason is the blood-guilt, which was the evidence of their wickedness. The fifth strophe (vs. 18-20,) describes the Chaldean as an idolater, whose idol is not profited by the skill of its maker. Even when overlaid with gold or silver it is useless as a teacher, and the prophet contrasts with it the fact that there is only one Jehovah, the true God, who is in the temple of His holiness.

1. *On my watch let me stand, and let me station myself upon a tower, and I will look out to see what he (Jehovah) will speak in me, and what (reply) I shall return upon my complaint.* The prophet expresses his earnest desire for an answer to his complaint, and having laid his complaint before Jehovah, the prophet reverently assumes the attitude of earnest expectation that he may learn the will of God. The intensity of his desire is expressed even in the paragogic form of the verb. It is not necessary to assume that he refers to any definite locality or particular tower, where he will watch. He desires to say that he will take the position of earnest expectation, so that, like the sentinel on his outpost, or the watchman on his tower, he may obtain the earliest and clearest information respecting the object of his solicitude, and then, like sentinel and watchman, inform his waiting brethren. "I will look out to see." The verb translated "look out," is the root of the noun meaning "watchman," and "watch-tower." "What he (Jehovah) will speak in me." Others translate, "speak to me," but the version given above retains the usual form of the Hebrew preposition, and presents the additional thought that what he expected was an internal communication of the will of Jehovah, an inspiration. Similar examples of the use of the phrase may be found in II Sam. 23: 2; Num. 12: 6; Zech. 1: 9, 13, 14; 2: 2, 7; 4: 1, 4, 5; 5: 5, 10; 6, 4. The prophets sometimes represented the people by presenting their com-

plaints to God, and sometimes were Jehovah's organ of communication to them. Here he asks what reply he, as the organ of Jehovah, shall make to the people whom he has represented in his complaint. The word "complaint" may also be rendered "argument" or "reproof". He refers in it to what he has said in 1: 12-17. God is our refuge. Though an host encamp against us, we may still find some sentinel-post or watch-tower where we may wait for Him. When we wait on Him, He will communicate with us. When He has spoken in us, we, and especially the ministry, should tell others what God has revealed to us.

2. *And Jehovah answered me and said, write a vision and inscribe it upon the tablets, so that he may run (the one) reading in it.* Jehovah replies directing the prophet to record the coming vision and informing him how and why this should be done. By his answer he fulfilled the expectation of the prophet, to whom a vision would be granted, of which he should make a permanent record, for a reason assigned in verse 3. This vision is contained in vs. 4-20, and as it is yet indefinite and unrevealed it is called *a* and not *the* vision. That which the prophet in verse 1 had described by the words, "what he shall speak in me," is here called a vision, to indicate it as a divine revelation supernaturally perceived. "And inscribe it upon the tablets." This clause may either be regarded as explanatory of the preceding one, or as prescribing an additional method of securing its preservation, viz., by giving it publicity. By tablets are meant the smooth surfaces of brass, stone, wood either bare or covered with wax, plaster, &c., upon which inscriptions intended for the public were written. This method of preservation, as the most recent excavations prove, was well known in the ancient east. In an excavation at Kouyunjik, the workman come upon a chamberful of tablets of terra cotta, with inscriptions in perfect preservation piled in heaps from the floor to the ceiling. The presence of the definite article before the word "tablets" points the prophet to those particular ones which he would

immediately recognize as intended to be used for the purpose. We can say nothing with certainty respecting the material or composition of these tablets. We know that they must have been in such places as would attract attention. The mention of more than one tablet may arise from the fact that since the vision must be written in large and distinctly legible characters, more than one would be needed to contain it all. But more probably the plural refers to several tablets in different positions, on each of which was a copy of the vision. The vision must be written in large plain letters, so that one might run beside it and still read.

3. *"For the vision is yet for the appointed time, and it shall pant for the end and not lie. Though it delay, wait for it. For it shall certainly come and not tarry."* The definite article is wanting before the word "vision" in the Hebrew, for the same reason as in the preceding verse, though it is necessary in English. This verse assigns the reason for the preservation of the vision by the methods prescribed in verse 2. The reason is, that its accomplishment will take place at some future time. It will be fulfilled at the time appointed in the counsels of God. The prophecy, though its fulfilment is future, pants for, that is, rapidly hastens on to its consummation or end. It is the word of Jehovah and therefore sure. His truth and His power go hand in hand, the vision hastens to the end that it may be proven true. Many interpreters translate this clause, "at the end it shall speak." This, however, does not suit the context well, for a vision is not spoken at the end, but long before it; nor can the verb here be used in the signification of proving itself true, which is entirely foreign to it: "It shall be entirely fulfilled; though its accomplishment seems to be delayed beyond your expectations, yet wait for it." Its fulfillment is certain and will not be delayed beyond the time prescribed by Jehovah. The prophet refers not to the second coming of Christ, (Pusey,) but to the coming of the Chaldeans.

4. *"Behold! Puffed up, not right, is his soul in him, and*

the righteous by his faith shall live." "Behold" directs the earnest attention of the reader to his following thought. By some interpreters the whole of the verse is referred to the Jews, while others refer the first clause to the Chaldeans, and the second to the Jews. We prefer the latter view, and think that Jehovah here announced the general principles of His government in their application to both Chaldeans and Jews. By "his soul in him" is meant the spirit that animated the Chaldean nation, the disposition which was manifested in its history. This is described first positively, and then negatively. Positively, it is puffed up, swollen, tumid. By some this word is taken as a noun, meaning, pride, and then, (the abstract for the concrete,) the proud. Thus Hendersen, who refers it to the Jews, translates, "Behold the proud." It is, however, never elsewhere used as a noun and need not be so taken here. Nor should the verb be interpreted, "to be proud." It expresses rather the idea of being swollen with all evil passions. Of these pride was but one. Others have been already mentioned in the description of the Chaldeans in the preceding chapter. Negatively, their spirit is described as not right, not straight, not level. It is not what it ought to be, not being conformed to the rule of rectitude. This declaration from the mouth of the Sovereign and Judge of all the earth, is tantamount to a judicial sentence of death, because sin must be punished. This is suggested, too, by the next clause, where the opposite character and fate are presented to view. "The righteous by his faith shall live." A righteous man is one who has been justified, one whom God regards and treats as righteous. He is righteous whose sins are pardoned, and to whom the righteousness of Christ is imputed unto justification. In the heart of a righteous man, the work of sanctification has commenced, so that the righteous are also the holy. It is therefore in strong contrast to the character portrayed in the preceding clause. The words "by his faith," are connected by the

punctuation of the modern Hebrew Bible, with the word "righteous." Thus the righteous by faith shall live. In some of the older editions, they are connected with the word "live," thus "the righteous shall live by his faith." The difference in the sense is readily seen. The same difference is noticed in the quotations of this clause in the New Testament, Rom. 1: 17; Heb. 10:38; Gal. 3: 11. The connection with "righteous," as indicated by the Hebrew points, is preferable here. Faith or trust in the word of God is thus indicated as the means through which a sinner becomes righteous. To all the righteous, life is promised. This is the sum of all good things. To live, is to enjoy the favor of God, which is life, and His loving-kindness, which is better than life. The general principle here announced, while it is true for all people and all times, is intended to apply specifically to the Jews, among whom the only righteous men on earth were to be found, and which had therefore the strongest claim among the nations of the earth to be called a "righteous nation." Nations must be rewarded and punished according to their deeds. Without faith there is no righteousness, and without righteousness no life.

5. *And moreover, because the wine is a robber, a mighty one, is arrogant, and will not dwell at home, who has widened as the grave his soul, and he is as death, and will not be satiated, and he has collected all nations unto him, and has gathered unto him all the peoples.* The general description of the wickedness of the Chaldeans in verse 4, is here made more specific. Jehovah points out one prevailing sin, and exhibits its effects on the character and conduct of the nations. His description in this verse bears a special relation to the complaint of the prophet, 1: 12-17, and to the thoughts and language of 1:13. The whole tenor of the verse shows that the relation between the first clause and the others is that of cause and effect. Wine stands for the intemperate use of intoxicating liquors, which is declared by

both sacred and profane historians to have been a national vice among the Chaldeans, Dan. 5; Herodotus 1: 191; Xenophon's *Cyropædia*, 7: 5: 15; Curtius, 1: 5: 1. As in Proverbs, wine is called a mocker, because it causes men to mock, so it is here called a robber, because it incited the Chaldeans to plunder, and thus made them what the prophet declared them to be, 1: 13. The noun translated "mighty one," is derived from a root signifying "to be strong." It is sometimes used to denote man in general, as the possessor of strength. It is here employed without the article, like a proper name, to designate the Chaldeans as a powerful people. It is contrasted here with *ish*, the ordinary term for man employed by the prophet, 1: 13, as descriptive of the Jewish nation. That which is true of the nation is also true of those individuals who may be regarded as the representatives of the nation, such as Nebuchadnezzar, under whom most of the Chaldean conquests were gained, and who may be considered the impersonation of the Chaldean character and power. This mighty people, excited by wine, "is arrogant," i. e., haughty, self-willed, and selfish. "And will not dwell at home." They are restless, impatient of the ease and tranquillity of home. "Who has widened as the grave his soul." The soul stands for the desires entertained by the nation. It is as greedy of conquest and the gains accruing from it, as the grave is of its prey. By some lexicographers, the word *Sheol* here translated "the grave," is derived from a root signifying "to ask, to crave," and by others, from a root signifying "to be hollow." With the latter derivation it corresponds very closely with the German "Holle," from the older form "Hohle," and also with the old English, "Hell," by which it is usually rendered in the English version. The figure presented in the words is that of a vast subterranean cavern or residence, into which each individual grave affords an inlet. It is the abode of the departed, and only means the place of punishment when limited to it by the

context. It answers exactly to our term "the grave," as used in such phases as "to go to the grave," "a voice from the grave." Like some huge monster, the grave devours the nations. So the Chaldean opens wide his jaws to devour the nations. "And he is as death, and will not be satiated." They are grasping, remorseless, and unavoidable. Their demands are insatiable. "And he has collected all nations unto him," &c. He shall take into his own possession the persons and property of the captive nations, and deal with them according to his own pleasure. One portion of this conduct was the deportation of captives from their own homes to some other portion of the Chaldean territory.

6. *Shall not these all of them raise a song concerning it and a taunt, sharp sayings to it, and shall say, Aha! the nation multiplying (that which belongs) not to it; how long? and loading upon it a mass of pledges.* The nations conquered and spoiled by the Chaldeans shall at length witness the fall of their conquerors, and join in a song expressive of their feelings. To "raise a song," means both to commence and to utter aloud. The verb employed in this clause is the root of the word translated "utterance" in the title of this book, 1: 1. It implies both a previous state of silence under the Chaldean domination, and such a state of excited feeling as must find vent in speech. The word translated "song" is derived from a root meaning "to resemble, to compare," and in general is applied to a figurative or allegorical composition. It may be translated according to circumstances by the terms, "proverb, enigma, parable, allegory," &c. It is a poetical effusion, and the prophet represents it as though it were chanted by a full chorus of the captive nations. The word "song" is therefore a sufficiently expressive translation of the original. The preposition "concerning," may be rendered "against." It points out the Chaldeans as the subjects of the song, and of course the objects of its denunciations. This song is described also as a "taunt," or a song of derision, which is found only here and

in Prov. 1: 6. The song consists of five stanzas or strophes, here called "sharp sayings," each containing three verses. With one exception, each of them, commences with the interjection "Aha," and begins its closing verse with "for." Each one, too, has its appropriate topic. These strophes are called "sharp" or "weighty" sayings. The word thus translated is applied to sayings that are full of meaning and worthy of earnest consideration. They may be abstruse, witty, sarcastic, or wise, according to circumstances. Delitzsch prefers the signification of "riddle," or "enigma," and thinks he has discovered several terms in which this peculiarity is supposed to be found. Among these he specifies the words translated "a mass of pledges," v. 6; "those that bite them," v. 7. The clause "and shall say," is by some interpreted "men shall say," by others, "it shall be said," but it seems better to regard the verb, which is in the singular, as agreeing with the noun "all" in the first clause. It expresses the concerted action of the whole body of the nations, which is the result of their common experience at the hands of the Chaldeans. With indignation they cry unitedly to God against their oppressors.

Directed by the Spirit of God, the voice of the nations becomes the voice of God, and thus their very complaints are prophetic of the overthrow of the Chaldeans. The song is uttered while still under the power of their conquerors. But such an appeal, prompted by God Himself, will not be made in vain. The interrogative form of the sentence expresses the strongest possible affirmation.

THE SONG OF THE NATIONS, VS. 6-20.

We now enter upon the consideration of the song whose peculiarities have already been described. In the first strophe, the nations denounce the injustice and oppression practiced by the Chaldeans, v. 6; declare the punishment which is their due, v. 7; and the reason why this penalty shall be inflicted, v. 8.

Verse 6 (b). The interjection "Aha" directs attention to the Chaldean nation, and expresses the indignation of the nations, and their prophetic exultation in view of the coming downfall of the oppressor, who is described as a nation increasing its own wealth by unjustly wresting their possessions from others. This is illustrated in the history of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, II Kings 24: 10-17; II Chron. 36: 7, 17, 18; Dan. 1: 2; 5: 23. The nations, in their question "how long?" desire to learn how long the Chaldeans shall pursue this course of conduct and enjoy their booty. The question implies a belief that their suffering will reach the compassion of Jehovah, that the period of Chaldean possession and enjoyment will not be perpetual, and an earnest desire that it may end soon. The Chaldean is represented in the last clause as a pawnbroker, who loads himself with an immense quantity of pawns. The vocation of a pawnbroker or usurer was prohibited by the law of Moses. The property and persons seized by the Chaldean are pledges borne away by a usurer, and these form a heavy burden upon his shoulders. The figure suggests that the property he bears away is not his own, has been unjustly obtained, and must some day be accounted for, while the weight of the burden may prove his ruin. Many of the older interpreters regard the word translated "a mass of pledges," as a compound of two words meaning "thick clay," and suppose the signification of the passage to be that the Chaldean, in seizing upon the wealth of conquered nations, has only burdened himself with that which is worthless, polluting and wearisome. Delitzsch regards this word as one of the riddles or enigmas already mentioned in this verse. He thinks the original word was designed to suggest both senses, "a mass of pledges" and "thick clay." This is ingenious but very improbable. Jehovah often employs nations to express His will. Sinners burden themselves with that which involves guilt and demands punishment. No sin escapes Jehovah's notice, and punishment,

under His government, is the natural and necessary result of sin.

7. *Shall not they that bite thee suddenly arise? and shall not they that shake thee awake, and thou be for spoils to them?* This verse records the result of the oppressive conduct of the Chaldeans, which shall be followed by its merited, appropriate and sudden punishment. The interrogative form of the sentence implies an affirmative answer, and is thus equivalent to a strong assertion. The agents by whom they shall be punished are described in the first clause as "those that bite thee." Some prefer to translate this term "those that shall exact usury of thee," and regard the word as employed with special reference to the character of usurer in which they are described in verse 6. Delitzsch thinks this one of the enigmas mentioned in verse 6, and gives to it the double sense of oppressive and usurious. Though we are not disposed to accept Delitzsch's theory, yet it seems quite probable that the word was here selected to express the idea of oppressive violence, and under this to describe the pain, the loss, the ruin, which will follow being bitten. Enemies shall arise against the Chaldeans as dangerous and deadly as the serpent, the scorpion, the lion. These oppressors shall arise suddenly, i. e., they shall abandon their state of inactivity, and engage actively in the work of punishment. This shall be done in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. The suddenness of the downfall of the Chaldean Empire corresponds very accurately with this description. In the second clause, the enemies of the Chaldean nation are described as accomplishing its ruin by shaking it, just as one shakes to its destruction a wall, a tree, or a building. The form of the original Hebrew participle implies earnest activity in the work. The figure expressed by the verb "awake" is similar to that of the preceding clause, being the rousing of a sleeper to consciousness and activity. The result of their efforts is that they shall mete to the Chaldeans an exact

and appropriate retribution for their sins. The very nations plundered by it, in turn shall spoil it. Divine providence sends appropriate punishment upon transgressors. This is often long delayed, and often suddenly inflicted, and always certain. Its suddenness is illustrated in the flood, the destruction of Sodom, the punishment of Pharaoh, the punishment of the enemies of God, Sennacherib, Nineveh, Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon.

8. *Because thou hast spoiled many nations, all the remnant of peoples shall spoil thee, on account of the blood-guilt of man, and the violence of land, city, and all dwelling in it.* This verse declares that the reason of the downfall of the Chaldean nation was its own injustice and oppression, and that the mode of its punishment should correspond exactly in kind with the external form of its sin. All that is left of the nations after its violence has been fully stated, shall join in this work of appropriate retribution. See Joshua 23:12; Zech. 14:2. The reason is plainly declared to be its guilt and violence. Its guilt was the guilt of murder, or blood-guiltiness, literally "the bloods" of man. The word "bloods" used in the plural number, always refers to the guilt of murder, and with this the nation's hands were indelibly stained. The destruction of life was a marked feature of its treatment of other nations. The guilt of murder was not its only cause of condemnation. It was liable also to punishment for the violence (see note on 1: 2,) done to conquered nations generally, and not merely to Judea and Jerusalem. Jer. 25:9; 27:3. The conquered nations would be injured in land, city, and people, i. e., in all their parts and interest.

The second strophe includes verses 9-11. Verse 9 denounces the Chaldean as a sinful plunderer. Verse 10 describes the result of his sin to be shame and guilt. Verse 11 expresses the cause of this result to be the very providence of God in those things in which his sin has been manifested.

9. *Aha ! The one plundering, plunder of evil, for his house, to set his nest on high, to deliver himself from the hand of evil.* "Aha !" directs attention to the Chaldean as in verse 6, and expresses condemnation, and denounces him as worthy of punishment. The Chaldean is described as rapacious and selfish. "Plunder of evil" is not such as leads to the punishment of the robber, but that which is gained by injustice and oppression. This unjust gain is acquired for the benefit of his own house, which includes not merely the reigning family, but the whole Chaldean nation. The great representative of the nation applied the gains to the aggrandizement of his own family. The Chaldean is compared to the eagle which places its nest on the top of some inaccessible cliff, where it may rear its brood and enjoy its prey in safety. The design of the Chaldean in all his rapacity is to make for himself and his family a safe and permanent home, in which he may secure himself from the hand or power of evil, which includes all the chastisement or punishment of which a nation is capable, and thus enjoy his sinful gains. This language of the nations clearly expresses the folly as well as the wickedness of hoping to escape evil by pursuing evil practices. One cannot deliver himself from evil by doing evil, therefore the nations say, "Aha !"

10. *"Thou hast devised shame to thy house, the destroying of many nations, and those that sin against thy soul."* The sin of the Chaldean has brought upon him two results, the first of these is shame to his house, for the reason that he had destroyed many nations. In devising and accomplishing this object, he had actually wrought his own disgrace. He had conquered the weak, enslaved the independent, removed the captives out of their own land, slain the helpless, burned their cities, and oppressed them without measure. The second result is guilt, which shall burden his own soul. The soul being the seat of feeling, the sensitive part of our being which takes cognizance of pleasure or pain, and being endowed with a conscience which decides upon the moral

quality of our actions, to sin against it is to sin against one's best interest, and implies necessary punishment. So the Chaldean by his own act involved his own soul in guilt and consequent ruin. Prov. 8: 36; 20: 2.

11. *For the stone from the wall shall cry out; and the cross-beam from the timber shall answer it.* This verse assigns the reason for the statement of the preceding verse, that the Chaldean had by his own action involved himself in shame, guilt, and consequent punishment. The reason is, that suffering unjustly inflicted demands retribution at the hands of a just God. This is figuratively expressed by ascribing feeling and speech to inanimate nature, a mode of illustration common in the Scriptures and used by the Saviour Himself. For example, the heavens, the firmament, day and night, Ps. 19: 1, 2; sun, moon, and stars, Ps. 148: 3; Job 38: 7; the sea, Ps. 98: 7; blood, Gen. 4: 10; stones, Luke 19: 40; all are said to testify to the nature and perfection of their Creator, and especially to His wisdom, power, goodness, and justice, as exhibited in them and through their instrumentality. The stone belonging to the wall of the Chaldean house, and the beam or girder among its timbers, with all nature, unite in such testimony. They furnish also another species of testimony. They differ from all the other inanimate speakers to which the Scriptures refer, because they are the work of men's hands, building materials prepared for the Chaldean palace, and placed in their proper position by his agency. They have been removed by man's hands from their original position in the quarry, the forest, or the wall or the timbers of some other building, transported to Babylon, and now contribute to the strength and the glory of his house. Here, too, their very presence, form, position, and experience testify against the rapacity and cruelty of the Chaldean. The same thought is presented by the prophet, 2: 9, when the Chaldean is described as a bird of prey which builds its nest out of what has been stolen from the nests of weaker birds, and like it has constructed a safe and strong residence out of the ma-

terials formerly composing the dwellings of the nations he has conquered. Another mode of testimony of which the stone and beam are capable is that of declaring what they have seen and heard. Inanimate nature may also record both sights and sounds, and reveal them in God's time and way. This mode of utterance is probably exemplified in the outcry of the stones mentioned in Luke 19: 40. So the captive nations may bear witness to what they have seen and heard as subjects of the Chaldean Empire. Another mode of testimony adopted by some interpreters represents the voice of the stone and beam to be an allusion to the worms and vermin occupying the now decayed beams and broken stones which were once materials in the Chaldean palace, and uttering their cry from the midst of its ruin. This is entirely improbable. The testimony conveyed in these various methods is indubitably true, and therefore incontrovertible. All utterances of the inanimate world are not only true, but consequently in entire accord with each other. The implication here is that the stone and beam never conflict in their declarations. The testimony thus rendered involves the necessary punishment of the Chaldean, because the God of nature and providence is the Sovereign of the universe. True testimony will decide His actions, and whether sin be found in a nation or an individual, it must be punished.

12-14. In this strophe, the Chaldean is charged with seeking his own aggrandizement through blood and crime. In verse 13, his efforts are declared to be useless, and they will terminate in utter ruin, because (verse 14,) all shall know the Lord.

12. *Aha! The one building a city in blood-guilt, and a town in crime.* On the interjection "Aha!" see verses 6 and 9. The word "city" and "town" are here used as poetical equivalents. They apply to the cities and towns built or established by the Chaldeans through the labor of captive nations, and especially to the city of Babylon, the capi-

tal of Chaldea, which Nebuchadnezzar boasts of having built up by the might of his power, Jer. 51: 58; Micah 3: 10; Jer. 22: 13. This the nations declare to have been built in bloodshed and crime, by compelling unwilling service through the practice of murder. The word translated "blood-guilt" is the plural of the noun meaning "blood," and always signifies the guilt of murder, bloodguiltiness, as in verse 8.

13. *Behold! is it not from Jehovah of Hosts, and nations toil just for the fire, and peoples weary themselves just for vanity.* "Jehovah of Hosts" does not signify that Jehovah is the God of battles, (Clericus,) but the Sovereign of the whole universe, into whatever classes of being it may be divided, such as the spiritual world, material creation, human and animal races, and whatsoever else has been brought into being by His omnipotent hand. The attention of the hearer is directed to Jehovah, from whom that is said to come to pass, which occurs because He has decreed it, and because His wisdom and power execute it. His purposes are derived from the suggestions of neither angels nor men. Those purposes will be executed without regard to the expectation or opposition of His creatures, and their fulfilment will force upon all, the conviction of His Sovereignty. Here the captive nations, most of whom were heathen, will join in the recognition of Jehovah, the true God, the covenant God of Israel. The conjunction "and," which occurs twice, indicates a causal connection between the first clause and each of the others, and may therefore be best translated by "that." God decrees it, and consequently, nations toil for naught. The sentiment contained in the last two clauses is expressed in general terms and is applicable to all nations, in so far as they stand opposed to the kingdom of God, and labor merely for their own aggrandizement. The kingdoms of the world are not now the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. As the language of the captive nations, it is designed to apply specially to the

Chaldean nation, which was the grand representative of evil, and to nations which toiled under its own despotism. These toiled just for the fire, and wearied themselves just for vanity. Hard and wearisome as their labor is, it is utterly useless, because it will be consumed totally and irremediably. An old interpreter illustrates this by comparing their work to the web of cloth which passes out of the weaver's loom into a furnace. Haggai 1: 6 furnishes similar illustrations.

14. *For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah, as the waters shall cover the sea.* This verse contains the reason why the toil of nations shall be useless. That reason is that the earth shall be completely filled with the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah. The "glory of the Lord" signifies the manifestation of the excellence of Jehovah as revealed in works of creation, providence and redemption, and consequently of the establishment, maintenance and progress of the kingdom of God upon the earth. To "know" the glory of Jehovah is not merely to be acquainted with it, nor to comprehend its mysteries, but actually to experience the regenerating, sanctifying and elevating power of the gospel. This shall be the experience of the whole earth in God's time and way. It may be long postponed, but it will come certainly and completely. With this knowledge the earth shall be filled as the waters cover the sea, i. e., the bed or bottom of the sea, which is occupied by its waters completely and unceasingly. As the waters hide all inequalities of the bed of the sea, and so fill it as to reduce them to a line and surface of perfect beauty, so shall this knowledge of God remove all traces of sin and suffering. Unlike the waters of the flood, this knowledge shall give life and happiness to all the inhabitants of the earth.

15-17. The Chaldean, like a deceiver who intoxicates his neighbor, pours out his wrath upon the nations, just in order to feast his eyes upon their shame. V. 16. He shall be punished by being compelled to drink of the cup of the Lord's right hand, which shall bring upon him great shame.

V. 17. Thus shall he be punished, because of his violence, which always demands the interference of Jehovah's right hand.

15. *Aha! the one giving his neighbor drink, pouring out thy wrath, and even (so as) to intoxicate, in order to behold their nakedness.* "Aha!" See note, verse 6, (b.) The pronouns of the second and third persons, the singular and plural, as interchanged in this verse, are occurrences not uncommon in the Hebrew. The interchange is here so obvious that it produces no obscurity. The noun "neighbor" is used collectively to designate any or all of the neighboring nations. To these the Chaldean gives intoxicating drink, not literally, (Pool,) but, as is explained by the next clause, by pouring out his wrath for them to drink. The word "wrath" means originally "heat," and hence, any violent passion. Here it expresses the violence and cruelty exhibited to the nations by the Chaldeans. This cup of wrath they compel the nations to drink unto intoxication. There is a limit to their cruel violence, until the nations lie before them in a miserable, helpless and shameful condition. The design of the Chaldean is that he may feast his eyes upon the shame of those nations whom he has brought into this fearful state, and exult in the cunning and power which have wrought their ruin. The reference which some interpreters have imagined in this clause, to a peculiar sin of which the Babylonians are charged by Herodotus and Ctesias, is needless and inconsistent with the drift of the passage.

16. *Thou art satiated with shame from glory. Drink also thou and show thyself uncircumcised. The cup of the right hand of Jehovah shall turn itself unto thee, and ignominy shall be upon thy glory.* This verse contains the result of the treatment of the captive nations by the Chaldean, which shall be severe and appropriate. As he brought shame upon others, so shall he drink large and copious draughts of it, until his proud spirit is as thoroughly filled with

shame as it was once with joy. This punishment will be the more humiliating, because it is a descent from glory to shame. The prediction is here thrown into the form of a command, and indicates the stern necessity of obedience to the highest authority. The effect of drinking upon them, will be the same as in the case of the captive nations, namely, misery, helplessness, and disgrace, while the additional thought is suggested that in the exposure of his uncircumcised state, all will recognize his estrangement from the covenant of life. The "right hand" of Jehovah is the seat of His power, and is employed in the execution of His purposes. It holds the cup of His wrath, and in due time it shall turn towards the Chaldean, Lam. 4: 21. When his turn comes to drink, he cannot put it away from him, but must drain it to the very dregs. The word translated "ignominy" has been interpreted by some as signifying "the most extreme contempt," by others as the compound word signifying, "vomit of shame," "*vomitus ignominiae*," (Vulgate). Either of these interpretations expresses the idea that his glory shall be exchanged for ignominy, and shall be concealed by it from human view.

17. *For the violence of Lebanon shall cover thee, and spoiling of beasts shall terrify them; on account of the blood-guilt of man, and violence of the land, city and all dwelling in it.* This verse presents the reason why such shame shall rest upon Babylon. And in order to express it more forcibly, the punishment is first figuratively described, and its cause then stated in language quoted from 2: 8. "Lebanon" is the name of a mountain range in the northern part of Palestine. It was so goodly and important a part of the country that its name is sometimes used as the designation of the whole land of promise, as in Isa. 14: 4, 8. Some interpreters think it so used here, and that the first clause of the verse describes the injury done by the Chaldeans to the whole land, which was the rightful home of the professed people of God. Hendersen and others regard the

term "Lebanon" as signifying only the city of Jerusalem, because materials brought from Lebanon were employed in the construction of a part of the city, (see Jer. 22: 23; Ezek. 17: 23; Zech. 11: 1,) and partly because of the stateliness of its buildings and especially of the grandeur of the temple. The prophet designs rather to express the chastisement of the sin of the Chaldean by means of a figurative reference to Lebanon. Lebanon was celebrated as abounding in goodly cedars, (Jer. 22: 23; I Kings 5: 6; Ps. 27: 5; Isa. 14: 8; Ezra 3: 7,) and also in wild animals, (II Kings 14: 9; Song of Sol. 4: 8). Its forests were liable to be destroyed by violence, and its beasts to be spoiled by Israel's enemies, a mode of treatment which shall terrify them. "Violence" signifies the irrational and illegal exercise of power. Lebanon would be subjected to it by the felling of its cedars, (Isa. 14: 8,) and also by the destruction of its beasts, which shall terrify the people, because a mere remnant of them would be left. Both "violence" and "spoil" must be regarded as the subject of the verb in the first clause, "shall cover thee," and thus the declaration is made that an infliction similar to that suffered by the forests and the beasts of Lebanon shall fall upon the Chaldean, and this infliction shall be severe and unavoidable. On the latter part of the verse, which is quoted from verse 8 see remarks on that verse.

18-20. This paragraph differs in form from the other divisions of the song, the interjection "Aha" commencing the second verse of the strophe instead of the first, and the last verse beginning with "and" instead of "for." The nations, in verse 18, declare the unprofitableness of idols, and the consequent uselessness of idolatry. In verse 19, the nations denounce the sin of idolatry wherever it occurs, and especially among the Chaldeans, and then prove its folly. Verse 20 assigns a reason for casting off idolatry, because Jehovah is the true God who dwells in heaven, and is the supreme Lord.

18. *What does it profit a graven image though its maker*

has graven it? a molten image and teacher of falsehood, though the maker of his work trusted upon it, to make dumb idols? The question here implies the answer that idols derive no advantage from the labor and skill of him who makes them, (Jer. 2: 11,) but whatever be their size, form, or beauty, they still remain a log of wood, a block of stone, or a mass of metal. The very terms here employed to describe an idol, a "graven image," and a "molten image" show the folly of idol worship. Their very forms are due to the skill of the workman. They are lifeless matter, "the product of his art and yet the hope of his soul," (Pool.) When made, they are dumb idols incapable of speech, and their silence is the strongest evidence that they have not been profited by the workman's skill. Even when pretended oracles are given in their name, the event proves them false, and they therefore earn for themselves the title of teacher of falsehood. But God is the true teacher, Jer. 10: 8-14; Job 36: 22. Therefore because they still remain dumb, their service is unprofitable.

19. *Aha! The one saying to the wood, awake! Arise, to the dumb stone; shall it teach? Behold! this is overlaid with gold and silver, and there is no spirit at all in the midst of it.* "Aha" must be interpreted here as in verse 6. The Chaldean is now charged with the crime whose unprofitableness has just been exposed, and consequently all idolatrous nations share in his guilt and folly. He is guilty of saying to that which is mere wood and stone, "awake," "arise," i. e., abandon your present state of repose and inaction, and exert yourselves to help me. The folly of this petition is forcibly shown by the question, "shall it teach?" because it is from its very nature incapable of doing such a thing. Some translate this clause, "it shall teach," and regard it as the reason why the petitioner calls upon the idol, and a recognition of its power to help. But this signification would probably have been expressed by a verb in the second person singular. The folly of idolatry is moreover shown

by the fact that overlaying the idol with gold and silver is applicable only to an inanimate object, and while such treatment may increase its value, yet it cannot impart either spiritual or physical life. According to the account of the creation of man in Gen. 2: 7, the living spirit and the breath of man are intimately connected. But the idol is destitute of spirit, and consequently of breath, and both of these are essentially necessary to the articulation of an oracular response.

20. *And Jehovah is in the temple of his holiness. Be silent before him all the earth.* The conjunction "and" is here in place of the word "for," which occurs in the last verse of all the other strophes in the Song of the Nations. It introduces the coming truth concerning Jehovah as an additional fact, which must be considered in connection with the statements just made respecting idolatry. This position also suggests the strongest contrast between dumb idols and the living Jehovah. Though the word "for" does not introduce the sentence, yet there is also a casual connection between the following clause and the two preceding verses. The making of idols and idolatrous worship are entirely useless because Jehovah is the only true God. The name "Jehovah" describes Him as the self-existent, eternal, and unchangeable God. He is Jehovah of Hosts, because the Creator and Sovereign of all classes of beings. He is the covenant God of Israel, who will make all things work together for the good of His people. The "temple of His holiness" does not refer to the temple in Jerusalem, nor to the church on earth, but to heaven as His peculiar dwelling-place, which is consecrated to Him, and is free from all stain of impurity. Seated there He is the Sovereign of all creation, therefore all the earth and all its inhabitants are bound to be silent before Him, in token of their dependence upon Him, their reverential submission to His will, complete recognition of His supremacy, their conscious unworthiness, and their desire to seek His favor.

CHAPTER III.

The third chapter of this prophecy forms an integral portion of the book, and is closely related to 2: 1, where the prophet announces two things to be done by himself. He declares that he will stand on his watch and tower, to see first what Jehovah will speak in him, and secondly what reply he will return to Jehovah upon his complaint. The second chapter contains the prophet's account of Jehovah's communication in and through him, respecting the Chaldean nation, and the third chapter contains the prophet's reply as predicted by himself. It stands in its appointed place, and makes the book a complete whole. The prophet's appointed task is an act of worship before Jehovah in heaven, and this is indicated in the title of the chapter, verse 1. He prays in verse 2, presenting in penitent faith his desire for the advancement of God's work, and an exhibition of His mercy. In verses 3-16, he renders glory to God for His wonderful and His complete supremacy over all the earth. In verses 17-19, he announces his entire submission to Jehovah's will, and his confident expectation of good.

1. *A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet upon shiggionoth.* This composition is a prayer, and its title is also prefixed to several of the Psalms of David. See Psalms 17, 86, 90, 102, 142. The various elements of prayer, such as thanksgiving, adoration, confession, and petition, become prominent in these psalms according to the circumstances and feelings of the writer. The only petition in this prayer is contained in verse 2, while the rest of the composition is an expression of the writer's confident expectation of Jehovah's interference to help his people and punish his enemies. The term "shiggionoth" is very obscure. It is the plural of the noun *shiggaion*, which occurs only in the title of Ps. 7. Among the interpretations of the phrase the following may be noticed, none of which however can be positively asserted to be correct: first, "upon musical instruments called

shiggaions;" secondly, "after the manner of songs;" thirdly, "after the manner of elegiac or plaintive song;" fourthly, "after the manner of erratic songs, dithyrambic odes," a species of rhythmical composition which from its enthusiastic irregularity is admirably adapted for songs of triumph or victory; fifthly, "concerning wanderings, errors, sins of ignorance," which are then said to be the sins of the Chaldeans against the Jews.

2. *Jehovah! I have heard the communication of thee. I am afraid. Jehovah! vivify thy work in the midst of the years; thou wilt make it known; in wrath thou wilt remember to be merciful.* The first clause is literally rendered, "I have heard the hearing of thee." Some understand this to mean, "I have heard the messenger announcing thine approach." We prefer to regard it as the communication of God which had already been made to the prophet's hearing, i. e., the communication made to him concerning the great work of God. It corresponds in substance with the term "utterance," in 1: 1, and "vision," in 1: 2, as a description of an inspiration, while it designates it particularly as that which is heard concerning Jehovah. The effect of this revelation of Jehovah's sovereignty, justice and mercy filled him with deep and heartfelt reverence and awe. This effect follows every exhibition of Jehovah's presence and power. The prophet prays Jehovah to "vivify" His work, i. e., to execute it. The "work" of God can only mean the great work which is the subject of this book, and which Jehovah announces as His work in 1: 5. This was the employment of the Chaldean as the instrument in the chastisement of His professed people, and the rejection and punishment of that wicked nation when the appointed time should come. Trembling before the sovereign Jehovah, the prophet now prays that He will "vivify" His work, i. e., make it live, make it a living reality, accomplish it, so that what was prophecy should become history.

The phrase "in the midst of the years" signifies, during and within the years appointed for this purpose, so that the prescribed time shall not pass by until the work is accomplished. The petition of the first clause changes to the expression of believing anticipation in the second, that God will execute His promised work, and make it manifest to all. As God had directed the measures to be taken for disseminating the vision of chapter 2 very widely, (2: 2,) now the prophet declares his belief that God will make the fulfillment known. Jehovah's anger would be displayed both in the chastisement of the Jews by the Chaldeans, and also in the punishment of the Chaldeans for their wickedness. Even while this process of punishment is going on, the prophet expresses the hope that God will not forget to show mercy to his oppressed and distressed people. The very expression of his faith is really a continuation of the petition in the first clause.

3. *A god shall come from Teman, and a holy one from Mount Paran. Selah. His splendor has covered the heavens, and the earth is full of his praise.* The term usually employed to designate God is *Elohim*, which is a noun in the plural number. The word used in this verse is *Eloah*, which differs only in being in the singular number. Many writers think it is introduced here as a poetical equivalent to the ordinary form *Elohim*, but it seems more probable that as the plural is applied to God to describe Him as the supreme object of reverence, the singular is here used to suggest the idea of "a god," indefinitely. The prophet receives intimations of the approach of a divine Being, whose presence individually as Jehovah is left to be inferred by the preceding inscription. In this way the passage differs from 1: 12, where Jehovah is called by the prophet "My God," *Elohim*, "My holy one." Teman is a country lying to the south and east of Idumea. It derived its name from Teman the grandson of Esau. The name signifies "the south," and some interpreters prefer to give it that meaning here. But the par-

allelism demands a proper name here as well as in the second clause. Paran is applied to the whole region between Judea and Sinai, part of which was a wilderness, and part hilly and mountainous. The term "Mount" describes it as a hilly country rather than as a single mountain peak or range. The ancient name is still preserved in Wady Feiran, a ravine north of Mount Sinai. The reason why God is said to come from these places is, these were the scenes of His ancient wonders. Gen. 21: 21; I Sam. 25: 1; Deut. 33: 2; Gen. 36: 11-42; Jer. 49: 7; Amos 1: 12. He had once brought up His people Israel from Egypt through these lands into Canaan, and had exhibited His justice and His mercy to them in His wonderful dealings with them. The prophet would now represent Him as coming from the scenes then made memorable, to perform another great act in the drama of the church's history by chastising and delivering His people a second time. The object of His coming is therefore the prosecution of the great work mentioned in the preceding verse. "Selah." "Pause." The word "Selah" is now generally interpreted as we have here translated it. It is supposed to have indicated a pause in the recitation of the Psalm, while the instruments performed an interlude. It generally occurs at the close of a strain, and in some instances is several times repeated in the same Psalm. It is occasionally found at the close of the piece, and is supposed to indicate that it must not be repeated. Other interpretations have been given, which need not be repeated, as they are generally abandoned. During the pause the tokens of the presence of the Deity became more manifest and glorious, and the prophet exchanges the future tense for the present. His approach is so attended with a display of His divine majesty, that the heavens and the earth are flooded with it as they are with the light of the rising sun. "His praise" suggests the thought that the earth, by receiving and reflecting His glory, actually praises Him for it.

4. *And there shall be brightness as the light. He has*

horns from his hand, and there is the veiling of his strength. The progressive development of the theophany is described in such terms as suggest a description of sunrise. In this natural phenomenon the heavens are first illuminated by the beams of the sun, then the earth is touched by them, and everything is flooded with brilliant, glorious light. So now the prophet would represent the coming divinity as shedding forth such brightness as fills and adorns everything. Some take the word translated "the light" to mean the sun, as in Job 24: 14, but this translation is needless. As the theophany advances, the all-pervading light is traced to its source, the hand of the Deity. The word "horns" designates the rays of light which proceed from a luminous body. It is so used by the Arabs. Both ancient and modern pictorial illustrations of the sun represent it by a circle surrounded by cones or horns. The word "horns" in the original is in the dual number, not to indicate that there are but two rays, but simply because those objects usually found in pairs are expressed by nouns in the dual number. In the hand and the horns, both of which are Scriptural emblems of power, is His strength "veiled," concealed from observation. The hand of the Deity, which He is wont to use in the accomplishment of His promises and threatenings, is the seat of His power, and the effulgent brightness proceeding from it, is at once the token and veil of His strength.

5. *Before him pestilence shall move on, and plague shall go out at his feet.* He is a terrible and dreadful God. The most awful scourges of humanity attend His progress. The word translated "plague" is rendered by some, "birds of prey," by others, "lightning," and by others, "coals of fire," but the signification of burning, inflammatory disease, is suited to the etymology of the word, (compare the usage in Ps. 9: 16 ; Deut. 32 : 34,) and suits the parallelism of the clause. The phrase to "go out at one's feet" signifies "to accompany a leader, to follow in his train."

6. *He stood and measured the earth; he looked and scat-*

tered nations; and the old mountains broke asunder, the hills of eternity sank; ways of eternity are to him. Having reached the theatre where His mighty work must be performed, the God stood still and measured the earth. Some give to the verb translated "measured" the sense of "He causes to tremble," deriving it from a root nowhere else found, and urge in support of this version the parallelism of the second clause. But this is not sufficient reason for changing the signification of the verb, which is definitely fixed by usage. By measuring the earth, many understand that He measures it with His eyes, surveys it as the scene of His approaching work. We prefer to regard Him as measuring it with His stride. His form is so vast, that as he stood, he measured the whole earth, like the apocalyptic angel, who stands, with one foot on sea, and the other on land. Thus standing in His majesty, he just looks upon the earth, and the effects of his glance are displayed both in the rational and material creation. Whole nations are scattered by it, as chaff is scattered by the wind. The adjectives in the remaining clauses of the Authorized Version are nouns in the Hebrew, and would be translated literally "the mountains of perpetuity," "the hills of eternity," "the ways of eternity." Not only are men smitten and scattered by His glance, but it rends asunder the very frame work of nature. The very mountains and hills that are so old, and have seen so many changes unmoved, now break and are levelled to the ground before Him. By the "ways of Jehovah," Hitzig understands the paths on which Jehovah walks, and because He walks upon them they are affected as describe in the preceding clause. But it is better to take the word "ways" in its ordinary sense of His acts. The passage then represents Him as resuming or repeating the same great deeds which he had performed of old, and perhaps especially those He wrought in bringing His people from Egypt to Canaan.

7. *I saw the tents of Cushan under iniquity; the curtains*

of the land of Midian shall tremble. The general statements of the preceding verse are now particularized by specifying the effects produced upon Cushan and Midian by the presence and looks of Jehovah. The term "Cushan" occurs nowhere else, but it is generally conceded to be a mere poetical variation of "Cush," the termination being added to bring it into close analogy with Midian. Most modern interpreters refer the name "Cush" or Ethiopia to a rich and powerful empire occupying the region south of Egypt, now called Abyssinia. The land of Midian lay east and north of the Elanitic arm of the Red Sea to the land of Moab. These two are mentioned as individuals taken from the countries south of Palestine, and representing all the rest. The "curtains" signify literally the "hangings" of which the tent is made, and derive their name from their tremulous motion in the wind. The word is used as a synonym for "tents" in the first clause, and both stand for their inhabitants. To be under iniquity, is to be under its power, to suffer it as a heavy burden.

8. *Against the rivers has burned, Jehovah! against the rivers thine anger, against the sea thy wrath; for thou wilt ride upon thy horses, thy chariots of salvation.* In ancient times Jehovah had exhibited His power by smiting the Nile, the Red Sea, and the Jordan. The prophet now asks whether Jehovah would repeat these ancient wonders. The question is not designed to elicit or suggest a negative answer, as Hendersen thinks, but in connection with the last clause of the verse is designed to express the thought that Jehovah is now riding forth in the same majestic display which attended Him when He smote the Nile, the Red Sea, and the Jordan. The horses and chariots are mentioned, not to represent lightning, or angelic spirits, but as the military accompaniments of a great conqueror. They are called "the chariots of salvation" because in them Jehovah comes to deliver His people.

9. *In nakedness thy bow is made bare; sworn missiles is*

the word. Selah. With rivers thou wilt cleave earth. Hesselberg and Hitzig think the rainbow is meant, but it suits the context better to explain it of the military bow. This was carried in a case or sheath, to which the Greeks and Latins gave the name of corytos. The act of withdrawing the bow from the sheath indicated preparation for immediate action. Thus Jehovah now prepares Himself for the execution of His work of salvation. The second clause is one of the most difficult in the book, and the ingenuity of interpreters has furnished a hundred different expositions of it. Among the many interpretations of this passage, it may be interesting to our readers to present the following: 1. "sworn are the rods of His word," i. e., the penalties decreed by the word of God are confirmed by an oath and hence are unchangeable and unavoidable. Gesenius. 2. Rosenmueller and others translate: "the oaths of the tribes, even the promise," i. e., God in making bare His bow will accomplish the salvation of His people and fulfill the promise which He made to the tribes of Israel and sealed with his oath. 3. Hesselberg and Hitzig read here: "seven are the lines (of the bow.) (Let) a song of victory (be sung.)" 4. Hendersen: "Sevens of spears was the word," i. e., the word of command. 5. Maurer reads: "The spears are satiated (with blood). A song (of victory)". 6. Keil: "Rods are sworn by word." 7. Schaff: Rods (of chastisement) are sworn by the word." In the translation we have given, the description of the warlike preparation commenced in the first clause is continued by describing the missiles as sworn, i. e., trusty, sworn to do their duty. The word translated "missiles" includes all sorts of jaculatory weapons, such as arrows, darts, spears, &c. Here probably it signifies "arrows," which are the representatives of such instruments as Jehovah employs in the execution of His purposes, as lightning, which is often called God's "arrow." Having thus presented the Divine Warrior as all ready for action, the prophet next mentions the word or roar of the thunders

which accompany and follow the discharge of the heavenly artillery. "The thunder spoke." Blinded by the brilliance of the arrows, he appropriately pursues the description through the information furnished by the sense of hearing. There is then a "Selah," a pause, while the weapons of Jehovah perform their work, and the awe-struck prophet recovers from his terror and receives the word. After the pause, the prophet beholds the coming effect of Jehovah's power. The surface of the earth shall be cleft with deep chasms which form the beds of rivers. Such has been the case already with many of the rivers of Palestine, which wind along through deep and narrow valleys, hemmed in by lofty and precipitous walls of rock.

10. *The mountains saw thee; they trembled; the flood of waters has passed by; the abyss uttered its voice, lifted up its hands on high.* The theophany continues with a description of the consequence of God's presence upon nature. This corresponds with what is said in verses 6-8, and describes again the effect produced upon the mountains and waters by their vision of God. The tremor of the mountains indicates their sense of His presence, wisdom, power, and holiness. The next effect produced by the appearance of God is the overflowing of waters which passed by, which are an acknowledgment of Jehovah's presence, power, wisdom, holiness and covenant love to His people. This had already been manifested graciously in the opening of a path through the Red Sea and the Jordan for the use of Israel, and positively in the judgments of the flood and of the Dead Sea. It would reappear figuratively in the punishment of Chaldea and the restoration of Judah to his own land. When God's time came, and in close connection with what had been previously predicted, the deep uttered his voice by the roaring of his waters and exhibited his power by the lifting up of his waves. Mountains and floods, both land and water thus express their sympathy with each other and their mutual recognition of the presence of Jehovah.

11. *Sun, moon, stood in their habitation; at the light of thine arrows they shall go forth, at the brightness of the glittering of thy spear.* The influence of Jehovah's presence extends even to the heavenly bodies. The most conspicuous of these, the sun and moon, are arrested in their course; and stand still as they once did in the days of Joshua, Josh. 10: 12, 13. But instead of continuing to shine as they did on that memorable occasion, they withdraw into their habitations, and thus at once conceal themselves from view and plunge the world into total darkness. The "habitation" of the sun signifies the places whither he retires from observation and shuts in his glories. The west as the place of sunset is thus called his tent or tabernacle. Some, in view of this fact, interpret this passage of the sudden descent of the sun and moon to the western horizon. But this is inconsistent with the signification of the verb "to stand," which conveys the idea that they remained just where they were. Gesenius thinks the term "habitation" refers to one of the poetic signs of the Zodiac, which were called by the Hebrews, "the inns of the sun." But these terms have reference to his annual motion, and would be unsuitable here, where the reference plainly is to his diurnal motion. It is preferable, therefore, to understand that sun and moon withdrew each into its own habitation composed of the storm-clouds that cover the earth. The cause of their withdrawal is the terrible display of Jehovah's might, which has been described in its effect upon the mountains by trembling, upon the waters by roaring, and upon the sun and moon not merely by becoming pale, (Ewald,) but by their entire obscuration. The glory of the coming conqueror is manifested in the light of His arrows and the brightness of His glittering spear, from both of which emanates the highest brilliancy because these instruments belong to a conquering and glorious God. The verb translated "go forth" is in the Piel form, and expresses the rapidity and power with which the heavenly bodies shall go forth to execute their mission as they did in the days of Joshua.

12. *In indignation thou shalt march through the earth; in anger thou shalt trample the nations.* Displaying His hatred of sin, and inflicting its due punishment, Jehovah passes through the earth with the rapid, onward march of a conqueror, as in Judges 5: 6; Psalm 68: 8; Isa. 63: 6. He destroys not all nations, for He has come to save His own people. Nothing can hinder His progress. He goes whithersoever He pleases upon the face of the earth. The nations are trodden beneath His feet with as much ease as the unresisting grain is threshed out upon the floor.

13. *Thou hast gone out unto the salvation of thy people, unto the salvation of thine anointed; thou hast smitten the head from the house of the wicked, to lay bare the foundation unto the neck. Selah.* The object which Jehovah had in view in His interference is the deliverance of His people, and His anointed, and the punishment of their wicked enemies. Several ancient versions take the Hebrew particle which occurs in the clause as a preposition and translate "for salvation with thine anointed," i. e., with the promised Messiah. The objection to this version is that in the preceding description of Jehovah, no one was mentioned as His companion. It is better, therefore, to regard the particle as the illustrative particle which points at the anointed as the object of the action implied in the salvation. Our word Messiah is merely the anglicized form of the Hebrew word here translated "anointed," as "Christ" is of the Greek word by which the old versions interpret it. Anointing is the sign of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. It was therefore employed in the consecration of the prophets, priests, and kings, to signify the bestowal of those gifts which were requisite to the proper discharge of these offices. Kings are especially, in the Scriptures, the Lord's anointed, inasmuch as they held the highest office and were peculiar types of Christ and of His position as Head of the Church. The rite of unction is expressly recorded in the cases of Saul, David, and Solomon, and is supposed

to have been practised also in the case of their successors. From Ps. 2: 2, and Dan. 9: 2, the title Messiah becomes the common title of the great Deliverer whom the Jews expected even before the advent of Christ. The application of the term in this passage to the coming Messiah is adopted by many, among others by Delitzsch. The idea thus suggested is that the preservation of the Messiah was actually involved in the deliverance of God's people, because He was to spring from the Jews. To permit the destruction of the Jewish nation would be to falsify all the prophecies respecting the coming Saviour. As the Messiah was especially represented in every generation by a king who was the Lord's anointed, it is better to refer the term to the ideal personage, who was the special type of the royal Messiah, and to apply the term in the text to the whole series of anointed ones culminating in the person of Christ. All these, both types and anti-type, Jehovah went out to deliver. Some take the "anointed" to mean the Jewish nation, but the application of this term to the people is rare if not unexampled. In designating the Chaldean, the prophet recurs to an epithet which he had before applied to that nation. His "house" means not merely his family or his kingdom, but rather his home as the place of his residence, the repository of his treasures, the seat of his power, and the scene of his social enjoyment. The "head" is the upper portion of the building which Jehovah smites and overthrows, so as to render it no longer habitable, and thus makes the Chaldean a houseless vagabond. The destruction of the house is total. The building must be overthrown until the foundation is laid bare unto the neck. The "neck" is probably an architectural term denoting the lower part, or foundation upon which the building rests. Since in the human frame the neck unites the head and the body, it is frequently applied in various languages to anything that forms a bond of union or connecting link, as in the phrase "a neck of land." So here, the neck of the

foundation or house is the base on which it rests, and by which it is fastened to the earth. Maurer and others interpret the phrase to mean "as high as the neck, in *altitudine colli*," i. e., only so much of it remains as would reach to the height of one's neck. The language of this clause reminds us of the first promise, that "the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head," a prophecy which has had many fulfillments, one of which consisted in the overthrow of the Chaldeans. The "Selah" or "Pause" suggests the propriety of another season of meditation, of adoration, thanksgiving and prayer.

14. *Thou hast pierced with his own missiles the head of his leaders; they shall rush on to scatter me; their rejoicing is as to devour the poor in a lurking place.* The prophet still continues to describe Jehovah's work, and addresses Him in the second person singular. In the execution of His plans, God has administered a decisive blow to His enemies, by smiting their chief ruler. In a despotic government like the Chaldean, all power resides in the autocrat, and when he is smitten the whole body is rendered powerless. Jehovah has smitten "with his own missiles," i. e., has turned against him the very weapons by which the despot obtained and maintained his authority. Delitzsch and others translate the word rendered "leaders" by "tribes, hordes," which, though it be correct, affects the general sense but little. The pronominal suffix in the word translated "his missiles" is by some referred to the people in verse 13, and by others to the anointed. But as the suffix in the word rendered "leaders" certainly refers to the Chaldeans, it is better to give this one the same reference. The verb translated "rush on," is the root of the noun signifying "a storm, a tempest." It describes the bold and restless efforts of the Chaldeans to destroy the chosen people. The prophet speaks of himself here as in 1: 12, as the representative of his scattered nation. The Chaldeans have also treated the people of God, not only as the bold warrior

treats his conquered foes, but like the crafty robber who lies in wait for his victim, seizes upon him by stealth, and brings him to his own lurking place to despoil him. "The poor" one is a frequent designation of God's people.

15. *Thou hast passed through the sea with thine horses, through the boiling of many waters.* As Jehovah passed through the Red Sea with His people and thus delivered them from the hand of the Egyptians, so now He will traverse the sea again and will deliver His people from the hand of the Chaldeans. He thus permits no obstacle, however great, to prevent the accomplishment of His designs. "The boiling of many waters" is a poetic description of "the sea" in the first clause, and represents the magnitude and multitude of the dangers by which God's people are threatened. Other interpreters render the phrase "the dregs of many waters," and understand it as a designation of the unclean and impure character of the enemies, or as descriptive of the bed or bottom of the sea upon which the passage is made.

16-19. The prophet describes the effects of fear and anxiety produced by this revelation in every part of his person, and his earnest desire for rest from trouble such as would accompany a Chaldean invasion, (V. 16,) and then declares his strong faith in the superintending providence of God, which shall give him all needed help. In the most dangerous circumstances God will supply him with strength, comfort and rejoicing, (vs. 17-19.)

16. *I heard and my belly trembled; at the voice my lips quivered; rottenness shall come into my bones, and under me I shall tremble, who shall rest unto a day of distress, to the going up of the people, he will invade him.* The prophet returns here to the same point whence he set out in verse 2. That which he "heard" was the whole communication made to him in the preceding chapter concerning the rise of the Chaldeans, God's employment of them as His rod, and their final overthrow, which is the special subject of the second

and third chapters. The revelation made to him produced extreme anxiety and fear, which were attended by the usual physical symptoms. "The voice" is that of Jehovah, which proclaimed to him the prophecies in 1: 5-11; 2:2-20; 3: 2-15.

The word here rendered "quivered" is the one usually translated "tingled" and applied to the tingling of the ears on hearing dreadful news. Some suppose there is an allusion here to the sound produced by the lips when under the influence of high nervous excitement, or by an unconscious attempt to imitate the words communicated by Jehovah. It is better, however, to use what seems to be the original signification of the verb, viz., "to vibrate, palpitate, quiver." It then expresses the nervous tremor of the lips in time of terror. The ancient versions generally have "trembling" instead of "rotteness," either because they had a different word in their copies of the prophecy, which is not probable, or as expressive of the sense of the word employed. The meaning of the phrase "rotteness shall come into my bones" is that his bones no longer gave strength and stability to his frame. They were as useless as though thoroughly diseased. The phrase "under me" is translated by some "in my place." We prefer to give "I who shall rest," i. e., must remain passive, unable to prevent coming trouble, and compelled to submit to the execution of Jehovah's will. The "day of distress" was the day when Judah should be overwhelmed by Chaldea. It was still future, and until it came the prophet must rest. "To the going up of the people, he will invade him," i. e., until the Chaldean who shall invade Judah shall come up against the Jewish people. This was the first great act in the work of God, and the one in which the people were interested. Though a sad day in itself, it would yet be the harbinger of a glorious day when the purification of God's people should be completed and their enemies totally overthrown.

17. *For the fig tree shall not bloom, and (there shall be) no produce on the vines, the work (fruit) of the olive has*

failed, and the fields not yielded food, the flock has been cut off from the fold, and no herd in the stalls. This verse assigns the reason for the application of the term, "the day of distress" to the future. The country will be involved in all the evil consequences of an invasion, which should reach everything upon which the people depended for support and comfort. The whole country shall be as though a blight had fallen upon the crops and a murrain upon the cattle.

18. *And I will rejoice in Jehovah, and exult in the God of my salvation.* In strong contrast with the sterility and gloom of the face of nature, the prophet has found a source of happiness, which fills him with joy and exultation. This is Jehovah, the God of his salvation, by whom he and his people shall be delivered.

19. *Jehovah, Lord, is my strength, and he has made my feet like hinds, he has caused me to walk on my heights. To (or for) the chief musician, on my stringed instruments.* The prophet still speaks as the representative of his people, and expresses his faith in the ability of Jehovah to help His people, and the consequent security of all that trust in Him. The same sentiment is found in Ps. 18: 33. The word translated "Lord" is the one which the Jews usually substituted for "Jehovah," which they never utter. When, however, it occurs in immediate connection with "Jehovah," as here, they substitute the word "Elohim, God," for "Jehovah." "Hinds" are described as the swiftest of their kind, and some suppose that the female is mentioned here, because swifter than the male. It hence readily escapes pursuit. Thus the prophet hopes to escape the impending evil which Jehovah has revealed. The "heights" are the mountain tops, where the hind is in perfect safety, because inaccessible to her pursuers. So shall a refuge be found for God's people in all times of trouble. The term translated "chief musician," is applied to an overseer to whose charge any work is committed, and especially to the director of the temple music. This prayer of Habakkuk is said to be "to"

(or for) him as the chief performer. "My stringed instruments." This may be connected with the preceding term, and so point out the chief musician as the director of the instrumental music, or it may be designed to inform him on what the psalm is to be performed. The expression *neginothai*, "my stringed instruments," is possibly a compound word, several of which appear in this prophecy. Some interpreters suggest that it consists of the noun *neginoth* and *ai*, an abbreviation of *Jah*, one of the names of the Deity. It would then signify the stringed instruments of Jah, and describes those consecrated to Jehovah and used in the temple service under the direction of the chief singer. This view is supported by the following considerations: First, the chief musician executed his office in the courts of the temple upon instruments consecrated to the use of Jehovah. These could not be said to belong to any man. Neither Hezekiah, who uses this phrase in Isa. 38: 23, nor Habakkuk, though probably a Levite, would have spoken of these holy instruments as his own. This interpretation is entirely consistent with the use of the word in both places already mentioned. Secondly, the title was the customary abbreviation of the name Jah or Jehovah. Many proper names show traces of the same composition. Among them is *Adhonai*, the name of Jehovah, which is interpreted "the Lord Jah." In this case the vowel *patahh* is lengthened into kamets, because always pronounced with reverence, and the same effect is produced in the case of *neginothai* by the pause accent. Other illustrations of this composition may be found in the names Ammishaddai, Num. 1: 12; Barzillai, II Sam. 17: 27; Haggai; Hushai, II Sam. 15: 32; Sarai, Gen. 11: 22. The interpretation "on my stringed instruments" is now more generally adopted, and is in entire accordance with the principles of Hebrew grammar. This translation implies that the prophet Habakkuk was a Levite, and so connected with the musicians of the temple service as to direct the performance of their public religious exercises or a portion of them. See the Introduction.

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